KING HENRY THE RAKE

[Henry VIII and His Women]

CLEMENT WOOD

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KING HENRY THE RAKE

HENRY VIII

About 1543

From the painting by Holbein, in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle

King Henry the Rake

[*Henry VIII and His Women*]

By

Clement Wood

Author of
"The Outline of Man's Knowledge," etc.

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KING HENRY THE RAKE

CHAPTER I

A Star Rises in the West

ON the 28th of June, in the brisk year 1491, Elizabeth, the "pale rose of York," was delivered of a third child, by his royal majesty Henry VII of England. Two boys and a girl, in the brief less than six years of marriage. Arthur, Prince of Wales, born a month prematurely, according to the church's records, would have the stained crown, of course; Margaret, the lovely little princess, could be coupled with Spain or France, Austria or Scotland; this puling brat . . . . What in God's high name were such a spilth of issue for, anyway? Girls you could mate to the sceptres of Christendom; perhaps Elizabeth would drop a few more. But—boys! One son was enough for any man; princes had been strangled in the Tower, hardly eight years gone. Oh, make a priest of the brat, and have an end of it: priest Henry—he must be named for his father, of course—Bishop Henry, perhaps Cardinal Henry, perhaps a wilder, more fantastic elevation still. Anything but a potential rival for Arthur's seat, as the next king . . . . Meanwhile, Her Majesty was resting well! Well, on with the masques: merry England was merry still!

Henry, the first Tudor, straight in the line of the Welsh Tudors who traced back to Cadwallader, strode from the queen's apartment in the palace at Greenwich, and ordered the trumpet blown to open the revels.

"The boy's another bastard," whispered a disgruntled courtier to an older man who stood beside him.

"No," wagged the graybeard, "his great-great-grandfather was a bastard. John Beaufort, earl of Somerset, was a byblow of John of Gaunt, by his trollop Katherine of Swineford; and Henry the king is great-grandson of this John Beaufort—"

"The children of the left never lose the bar sinister, I say."

"Would you brand all Christendom illegitimate? This young prince . . . ."

"Anyway, Henry Tudor has no more right to that gilt throne than I have."

A cackle of hushed mirth. "Innocent has hailed him king; and what the pope says is God's own word. Richard the strangler was stabbed on Bosworth Field; Stanley crowned this Tudor with his own hand; the armies, the Lords and the Commons, hailed him; the archbishop said the words; and, my friend, he wedded and bedded Elizabeth of York, with all the royal blood of England in her veins. Say what you will of this Henry; the baby prince, Margaret and Arthur—the throne is theirs. Oh, the trumpet again . . . . The Spanish ambassador is to be here, and another of those lying travellers from the barbarous East. Let's hasten, so that we can hear . . . ."

A roll of drums . . . . the gaudy crowds milling up and down the hall of the revels . . . . nobles, the few left of the old Norman blood, after the century's hemorrhage of the War of the Roses, squiring a sandblind crone of a mother, a wife, a daughter, or some pert gutter strumpet . . . . pages and minioned commoners treading on noble toes . . . . priests, richly clad, rallying the nobles and their dames, or nudging a brothel flower crooked in their arms . . . . heralds, esquires, coned and belled fools, dour war-

riors, panting maids of the queen, with attire and honor rumpled, shrewd money-lenders with an eye to the noble spendthrifts they dress and keep and squeeze to the last God's-penny of usury . . . . scholars who know their Italy as well as they know the ribald king's ear, starched grim punctilios from Spain, Austria, the near world's ends . . . . women, fresh on the bargain counter, or a bit shopworn, and even more leering and inviting of roguish eye . . . . Robin Hood and his band, St. George and his mummers, weather-ploughed mariners, poets and musicians, scullery boys with vast trays of food, loose girls forcing the tankards and goblets against every denial . . . .

An earl belched loudly; a roguish maid of honor brayed; the trumpets brayed; Henry the first Tudor raised his clenched hand for silence, and began to speak.

There is no silence; but those crowded nighest the king, and the grandee from triumphing Spain who spoke after him, could hear a little.

It's the ambassador talking . . . . And those who could not speak the language of Castile and Aragon off at other sports . . . . "His royal English majesty's ancestor, who took to wife Blanche of Castile . . . . Edmund, duke of York, married to Isabel of Castile . . . . our gracious queen Isabella of Castile, descended on both sides from your English John of Gaunt, his royal English majesty's ancestor . . . . Katherine, daughter of John of Gaunt, who mated with Henry III of Castile . . . . This promised nuptial between your Prince of Wales, Arthur, his most gracious majesty's firstborn, and the princess Catherine of Aragon . . . ."

"What's he saying?"

"—If those boors would keep silent a moment—"

"Take your stinking breath out of my face, you pox-smitten spawl of Belial, or, by this sword—"

"Oh, not here, in this crowd," with a girlish simper. "Follow me—"

The ambassador's voice again. "The foul Saracens driven out of all Andalusia, by his most Christian majesty Ferdinand III; the ring of Christian steel around Granada, whose foul Moslem leaders sell the bodies of their kin to our gracious majesties for a breath of gold . . . . By this year's end, the last vile crescent will have ceased to pollute the Iberian air, and, when the infidel Jews have followed them . . . . Portugal crushed at Toro, and the Holy Inquisition, the pope's right arm, smiting unbelief to leftward, to rightward . . . ."

It is another voice speaking now, a scar-faced Italian, one eye gouged out by an assassin's dagger in evil Asia, a merchant, a mariner, a purchasable captain of ship and sword, his grizzled hair tousled, his one good eye balefully retelling grim horrors. "Over the rim of the world, where men eat their fellow men . . . . There was an emperor here named Tamerlane, who built his palaces sky-high from the skulls of his slaughtered foes . . . . Each night a dozen fresh virgins, the most beautiful in all Asia, for his bed . . . . The devil, in the likeness of a bolt of lightning, cleft wide his body from the chin to the groin, and he was charred to a small black coal . . . . He had trodden all Asia underfoot, but the Christian knights hurled him back. The most marvellous city in the world, in which all England would be only a small suburb . . . ."

"God save us from liars," piously muttered a bishop, cuddling his doxy into a dark coign of the walls. "On your lips I find truth—"

"Where in God's name is the ale-girl?" fumed an upstart favorite of the king's.

"A toast," it came thickly from mottled royal lips, "to

her most Christian majesty, Elizabeth of England, and to the babe Henry Tudor—"

A roar in reply; tankards gulped down, and flung clattering against the wall . . . . a girl's squeal . . . . the crowd gaily eddying, milling, swiveting here and there . . . .

The royal revelry ended at last. Henry the king walked quietly out of the stenching hall, to the sour music of tipsy snores from various corners. One or two comely night-flowers, jetsam of the sea of beauty that bared its bosom to the kingly sun, made as if to stop him. His sight was turned inward; they left him, to find readier prey. And so alone to the royal chamber, to stare fixedly into the glass. Wrinkles . . . . a few more. At thirty-four . . . . Well, Time was an enveloping bastard, who clawed your face while you danced and sang and cosseted. He let his cloak of sable drabble down into the floor's dust, and stared again, gaze drowsily held by the scarlet and cloth of gold beneath. Musingly he pulled off the fouled boots, with their billowing overflow of lace figured with the stars of heaven set in diamonds and emeralds, amid flying birds in gold: he pulled off his boots, and stretched in contentment his red-scored toes. That Flemish wench had taken his feet for the dancing floor, the full measure with her.

Then, bare-toed and all, he strode over to the casement, and spread it wide, letting the cool early summer night air blow out the fogs in his brain. He stood, a remembering smile on his lips and in his clear eyes. What was it that don had said? Innocent's words: "king by the God-given right of conquest, royal blood, and popular choice."

Conquest? . . . . Bloody Bosworth field . . . . and Richard's corpse, blood-befouled and bare as a plucked capon, flung over a pack-horse and paraded through Leicester streets, while the filthy rabble jeered the dead devil, and

roared laudation of the living king. And that jackanapes Lambert Simnel, garbed up to stand for young Warwick, safe in the Tower all the while—what a jest, to capture the silly pretender, and set him to scouring pans in the king's own kitchen. Oh, he was king by conquest.

By royal blood? Henry the Welshman cackled softly to himself. He was no Plantagenet, none knew it surer than he. Since the reign of the imbecile son of the Black Prince, a century gone, brother had fought brother, the breadth and sweep of England, to determine whether the red rose of Lancaster, or the white rose of York, should float over ancient King Arthur's seat of Windsor. Bolingbroke, the fourth Henry, and the two Henries that followed him—these were true Lancastrians. Richard the imbecile had been done to death at Pontefract, to make the Lancastrian title sure. And then at last sixth Henry had lost his mind, and ultimately his kingdom and his head, no doubt the latter at the hands of bloody Richard of Gloucester. Edward IV, Richard's brother, reclaimed the clearer title of York to the throne, and left the two little princes as issue, to reign after him. Whereupon bloody Gloucester had befouled his own mother's name, holding that his brothers fourth Edward and George were bastards; had taken the throne, and had seen to it that the young princes were detained forever in the more perdurable Tower of the grave. And then, Bosworth field, and Richard dead, and only the princess Elizabeth, Edward's daughter, of the legitimate York blood. Richard had married the widow of the third Lancastrian's heir, had done her to death foully, and had planned to wed his own niece, the princess Elizabeth—projected incest, to make sure his usurper's title to the throne. And when Henry Tudor, young earl of Richmond, began to threaten, he had pushed Elizabeth's hand toward his, to seek to weld this Lancastrian byblow to him. Henry the king, recalling this,

twisted his lips wrily: he had had other plans for the kingship. Bosworth field, first . . . .

Henry Tudor smiled wrily. For all that he held the allegiance of all Lancaster, he knew where his chain of descent was snapped. His great-grandfather, John Beaufort, earl of Somerset, was a byblow of old John of Gaunt and his doxy, Katherine of Swineford. What if John had later married her; what if the imbecile king, the Black Prince's son, had had Parliament hold the bastard illegitimate: a thing done was a thing done. There was the bar sinister. John Beaufort's granddaughter Margaret, his own mother, had married Edmund Tudor, son of the widowed French queen of fifth Henry, and a private gentleman of Wales. Katherine of Valois had none of the blood royal of England in her veins; Owen Tudor had no royal blood whatever in his, unless the chroniclers were right, who held him one of Cadwallader's ancient line; and Margaret, his mother, was sprung from the left side of the line. So the Plantagenets had split into Lancaster and York, and these were both gone, and in their stead a Tudor from Wales held the sceptre and wore the crown. And, now that he himself had married Elizabeth of York, there could be no cloud in tomorrow's sky. Lambert Simnel the silly pretender polished pans in the scullery; this Perkin Warbeck, the son—God blast the zanies who perjured themselves to say otherwise!—of a Jehan de Werbecque, a poor burgess of Flanders, who could not even mouth rightly one word of English, could not long make trouble. Let Margaret of York, exiled in Flanders, hail him as one of the strangled princes; let France and Scotland and Maximilian of the Romans call him a Yorkist prince, if truth meant no more to them: by God, he'd have him in the scullery beside Lambert Simnel yet. So Henry the king swore to himself.

And one other cloud there was: the real Warwick,

seventeen years old, safe in the Tower now, God be praised, but no one could say for how long. Well, Piers Exton, in Pontefract castle, had shown one way, when he ended Richard II; and Gloucester had pointed the same road, when he had the princes strangled in the Tower. Let loose words be said, and young Warwick would go to join the rest of them, in the shadowy court of murdered kings and princes. No cloud this: having no more substance than the mad dreams of that loose-boasting Genoese, that penniless sea-wanderer Christopher Columbus, who had wearied the ears of the Tudor court with his fantastic dream of reaching the spice empires of Cipango and Cathay and India by sailing madly away from them, toward the setting of the sun and of all things in the ocean's end to the west. Let madmen dream, let princes plot: he, Henry the Tudor, sat on the saddle of the world, with Arthur to follow him; Margaret his daughter, and whatever other princesses his wife gave him, to marry the kingdoms of the world into a permanent amity and peace; and the squalling third babe, Henry, to sit in the see of Canterbury, or carry the blood of Plantaganet and Tudor into Peter's chair in the Vatican.

He lifted his head, to sniff the oaken night breeze once more. A thin sound piercing the brittle breathing silence . . . . a baby's plaintive wailing. The little brat was awake, then. Elizabeth's milk had not been enough for Margaret; perhaps another wetnurse from Wales . . . .

Already the gray dawn creeping over the Greenwich woods. Well, one more day, thank God, for a full feed of English food, and the rollicking pursuit of the stag; with roasted venison in the core of the forest, and downed tankards, and one of the sick queen's maids to tumble; and then back for another night of revelling. Oh, and, by God, he must have that Spanish ass before him again, and tell him to send word to Isabella and Ferdinand that he, Henry

Tudor, would brook no further delay in the ratification of the affiancement of Arthur, Prince of Wales, and the little Princess Catherine of Aragon. Well enough for them to fiddle and fumble, when there was doubt as to who held England. But there was no more doubt now. Yes, he must do that today, he repeated more drowsily.

Off came the scarlet and the cloth of gold, and he flung himself heavily on the royal bed, and the late night poured conqueringly throughout him.

CHAPTER II

The Fair Maid of Aragon

THE ambassador carried Henry Tudor's word back to Isabella and Ferdinand, and to Spain: Spain, on the rosy eve of ending all her centuries of crescent trouble. "Tomorrow, and for all tomorrows, all will be well with us . . . ."

Until the queen of Castile wedded her body and her lands to the king of Aragon, Spain had been three armed camps. West of the Iberian hills, and south of the Guadarrama, lay the kingdom of Castile, or Castile and Leon. Its kings and queens were also royal rulers of Gallicia and Asturias, Estremadura and Jaen, Cordova and Seville. There was a forgotten mire of disgrace, when the shameless Sancho the Fat and Bermudo the Gouty had squirmed abjectly before the Moslem caliphs. Alphonso the Eighth was the Castilian hero: he had driven out the Moslem Almohades, after mating his daughter to her near cousin, the Slobberer, king of Leon, an epileptic weakling. After strong John II, another weakling, Henry the Impotent, took the throne. He had a sister, Isabella, who was no weakling.

"Yes, we must marry," she had whispered to her cousin Ferdinand of Aragon. " 'The Impotent' raves against it, but . . . . That chit he calls his daughter is neither legitimate, nor, if truth be known, his at all. Oh, what if we're both under nineteen—we'll follow the Persian, and together mold the world to our heart's desire."

Ferdinand gazed in dumb adoration at his brilliant cousin. This attitude he was never to alter.

Isabella looked approval at the stalwart young arrogant.

"When I think what I was spared from . . . . Ugh! That dreadful Englishman, Edward the Fourth—rutting old giant, forty-three years older than my youth, who sought to wed me . . . . And I was only spared because of his sudden mad whim for an English widow. What with his successions of favorites, and mistresses—Jane Shore and the rest . . . ."

It was of the man who was to be the grandfather of Henry Tudor's children that she spoke: the father of the pale rose of York, who married Henry the Welshman. Instead of him, this prince of Aragon . . . .

Castile to the west; and, east of the Iberian hills, filling the vast central table land, lay Aragon, its ruler also king in Valencia and the Balearic Islands, and count of Barcelona and Provence. Almost more French and Italian than Spanish. Alphonso the Magnificent was its most resplendent monarch; but his tale is Italian, rather than Iberian. He left Naples by will to a bastard son, in spite of the pope's opposition; he left other estates to other bastards; and far-off Aragon he left to his brother John, who ruled to the age of eighty, when, blind and unconquerable by man, he yielded to a darker, stronger enemy, leaving his kingdoms to his son Ferdinand, who had wedded Isabella of Castile.

And the third armed camp was, far to the south, the Moorish stronghold of Granada, and a few adjacent seaports. To this sorry compass the Crescent in Spain had waned.

Isabella had not repeated to Ferdinand all that she had escaped from. She had been engaged first to Ferdinand's elder brother Charles, who died when she was ten; her brother had sought vainly to mate her to the Portuguese monarch; she had become engaged to Pedro Giron, of the lesser nobility, but on his way to the nuptials—the little Spanish princess was only thirteen at the time—he had died

suddenly. Edward IV of England, his bloody brother Richard the Strangler, the heir presumptive to the throne of France, had all sought her hand; but she had taken the matter into her own keeping, and selected this handsome cousin of Aragon.

The years passed . . . . sixteen of them. She had been queen now, with Ferdinand as consort, for eleven years. Bloody years they were: three years before her troops had killed every man, every woman, every child, in the sack of Alhama; one year before the allied Christians had laid waste the vegas of Granada, burning the harvests, uprooting every fruit tree; this very year the fortified town of Cohin had been taken, and every inhabitant put to the Christian sword. The queen had reached Alcala de Henares, in a rallying military progress throughout the kingdom, when the pangs came upon her. She lay moaning on her pallet; but she was a queen still.

"The news—God's mercy, give me the news from the front!"

The white-faced courier spoke, stumbling over his words. "They are pushing them into the sea! Your general, Cardinal Ximenes, has closed every northern gap, and Boabdil, last of the Saracen plagues, is yielding inch by inch!"

"For that, God be praised. Oh!" her body writhed, as she moaned. "What have I done, to suffer like this . . . ."

It was a girl, this child born to the salvo of the trumpets calling to the onslaught: a girl named Catherine, the "Donna Catalina" of the Spanish chronicles. A lovely girl . . . .

She had been born to the golden bray of the trumpets, the din of jousting arms, the lumbering of siege-wagons. Her mother's court was thronged with the chivalry of Spain and Europe; and European chivalry, as all knew, was

largely Spanish. She opened her wide young eyes to see all of them: the resplendent dons and paladins, the banners and panoplies of burnished mail, the legended shields, of the Christian knights; the imposing Oriental turbans and draperies of the Saracenic envoys and visitors; and, grotesque amid the splendor, a worn sea-captain, mumbling his tiresome fantastic dream of reaching the eastern spice empires, by turning his back upon them and faring west.

"A madman," the nobles shrugged, turning their backs upon his fantastic fervid pleas. "A wanderer on foot, begging a cup of water for his fainting companion from door to door, promising the world's wealth to the richest queen in the world!"

The little girl must have seen the weary Genoese adventurer, and must have laughed too. For this is man's way, when the weary prophets of earth point to the gold gates in the sunset. She laughed, and went to play with her companions on the lovely river-banks of the Xenil and the Darro, which watered the fertile vegas of the besieged stronghold, flowing within very sight of the Alhambra.

One day—she was four years old then—she was attired in her starched best, to behold the marriage, in 1489, of her elder sister Isabel to Don Alphonso—others name him Don Juan—the heir to the throne of Portugal. The boy's grandfather had married his niece Joanna, daughter of a Castilian king, and through her had claimed the Spanish throne, until Isabella and Ferdinand soundly trounced his army at Toro, and, as a price of peace, made him send his incestuous bride to a convent. The boy's father had stabbed to death his own brother-in-law, Ferdinand, duke of Vizeu, on an airy charge of rebellion, and had had some eighty more of his higher nobility executed on the same charge. Later, when the young bridegroom died, Catherine's sister, the young widow, was married to her dead husband's brother, who later became

Emanuel I of Portugal: another incestuous union, within the prohibited degrees of kinship. But the good father in Rome could excuse all that. To tangle the skein further, on Isabel's death, her sister, Maria, another of Catherine's sisters, became King Emanuel's second wife. All in the family . . . .

Catherine had another sister older than herself, Joanna, "mad Joanna," intermittently insane, who married Philip of Hapsburg, son of Maximilian, and had by him Charles V, emperor of the Romans and later king of Spain, ugly of face, who overate, trembled before mice and spiders, conquered much of Europe and even his own squalls of temper, and retired from the throne at last to indulge his religious fevers, his mania for foods, his love of his garden and its pets, his mechanical toys. Joanna the Mad, whose husband will die in time, will share in the story again.

It was in 1489 that the little Catherine had first seen a sister married; her wide round eyes saw much more, in the rich years following at once. Three years later, a more amazing sight: the illustrious Boabdil, or Abu Abdallah, turning to look for the last time on his captured stronghold of Medina Granada, while tears streamed from his eyes.

"Allah hu akbar!"—God alone is great—he wept aloud.

His Moorish mother retorted sternly, "It is becoming to you to weep your loss like a woman, since you could not defend yourself like a man!"

Within a year, the last Moor had left Spain. More than this the little princess saw. The year that the Saracens left, she may have seen the Genoese captain, the light of faith high in his eyes, setting sail from Palos to plough the watery field to the westward, seeking the spice lands. And soon she saw, and heard, the wild exultation, the reverberated shouts of triumph throughout the land when the mariner's ship

returned, with a report of wild lands found, and a new Spain opened to the world.

She was no more than seven this year; and this year she learned more of another matter. She must have overheard the court talk.

"Another Spanish pope; another Borgia dog in Peter's see," said mournfully.

"Roderick?" a sympathetic query.

"Ay, that's the one. It was bad enough, four years after our Isabella was born, to have Alphonso Borgia, from our Spanish scum, mount as Calixtus the Third. You know what our own Alphonso the Magnanimous of Aragon, the king's dead uncle, said publicly of him: that he had bedded his own sister, and had seduced his nephews, her children."

"Then came the Tuscan Pius, wasn't it?"

The speaker nodded. "A minion of every priest in Tuscany. And the imbecile Paul Second after him, with his painted face and his silly nostrums for the sick. A worse one followed, Sixtus, who knew his own sisters one by one, and their children after them; whose bull made all papal bastards princes of Italy. And then the godly Innocent the Tenth, who hailed this Henry Tudor as king in England: Innocent, a handsome Genoese boy started early in debauchery—"

The other chuckled. "Sixteen bastards he had already, before he was pope, I've heard."

"Bastards enough. You remember, he was the one that Prince Zizim, Sultan Bayazid's brother, called a dirty baboon, when he refused to salute the papal toe. I've read the chronicles about him: when he grew old, he drank a devil's brew made by a Jewish physician of the blood of three boys ten years old. And now—this second Borgia . . . ."

The little girl may have wearied of the strange incom-

prehensible talk, and run away. In time; it was hardly for her to hear of the details of Borgia pleasures with three generations of Vanozza women, and with more enough.

It was this little girl that Henry Tudor sought in marriage for his son Arthur, Prince of Wales. Reports had come to him of her mental precocity; of her darkly glowing, stately beauty; of her sweetness of word and deed. Tush, grunted the king; she is the daughter of Spain, and Arthur should marry her, if she were as homely as a hitching-post and as dull as the Spanish ambassador.

Isabella the canny held off consent to the match, until she had seen Henry seated so firmly in the saddle, that further dallying was unpolitic. And so the betrothal was said, while the little princess played delightedly in the courts of the conquered Alhambra, and in the fairy halls of the Generaliffe; then out from the shadow of airy Saracenic domes to the thickets of fig and heavy-scented jasmine and laden orange-trees, glowing pomegranate bushes and palms no statelier than she was growing to be. This was in 1496, and the girl was already eleven. Five years later, on the seventeenth day of August, she set sail from Corunna, to consummate the union.

Farewell forever to the warm south, the myrtle and the saffron crocus, the snowy rain of olive-petals and the plashing of the silver fountains. Farewell to that land where "to live soberly is not to live at all," to tales of Yusuf and his Veiled Men of the desert, of the winding of Roland's horn and Roncevaux and the battlecry of Charlemagne. You go to a misty and inclement land, gay-hearted, but not gay to all her children: to tales of a head-bowed king and a shattered table, to shadows of chill lands and the fierce fanatic zeal of northern blood.

The ocean was not kind, at first, to the flotilla of the little princess. It vomited a fierce storm, which drove the

ships and their retching royal burden back to the shores of Castile. Five weeks later, a second start was made; and in six days the passage to Plymouth was completed. Open your heart, England, to take this little queen to your breast: pomp and splendor, west-country masques and rural sports, with Lord Brook, steward of the royal palace, the duchess of Norfolk, the earl of Surrey, on hand as your attendants.

Spanish etiquette was as slow and punctilious as education in the Chinese alphabet. There could be no such thing as hurry, for all that this was in the ribald hastening land of Albion. It was one of the breed of English Novembers, the harshest, stormiest month of the twelve; the roads were mired and appalling. The princess and her attendants set out on horseback toward Thames; the royal bridegroom and his court, accompanied by domineering Henry Tudor the father, set out to meet them on horseback. Three or perhaps four days of this quagmired progression, and a fiercer storm than any yet met broke over both parties, not far from the town of Dogmersfield, still on the open downs. They rushed for shelter, and discovered each other.

But, pardon, slowly, slowly, as became Spanish etiquette. The Moors had lived long enough in Europe's warm western tip to have taught the Spaniards something of their Oriental ideas of feminine immurement. The high grandees who squired the young infant knew what they must do: they must shield her from all profane male eyes, until she stood in the end before the altar of God: then, and then only, would the veil be raised, and the opulent charms of the bride let burst upon the enravished eyes of the bridegroom. Not until the knot was tied in the eyes of man and God could she be seen.

Perhaps she was as homely as a hitching-post, English curiosity may have decided.

Henry the Tudor was a firm man, frigid, hard, tight-

hearted and tight-handed. He knew forms and ceremonials as well as the most whiskered don could know them. But, God's name, this was his own England, and who were the puny pismires daring to dictate to Henry the king what he could, and what he could not, do? The word of the dons was brought to him, and he announced flatly that he would do as his will commanded.

They sat down, in the bleak Hampshire downs, for a council of state, upon this throbbing question. The grim night mists blurred the faces of English curiosity and Spanish dignity alike; the sheets of icy rain draggled velvets and satins, and poured harmlessly only off the leather shirts of the common soldiers. The starched grandees, tightening their long capes over their chilled shoulders, shivering on their shivering chargers, were firm. They called on God to witness, He himself would not look upon a Spanish bride before the ceremony.

"This is England," snapped back Henry the king. "I choose to look upon the lady, and now."

The blunt lords beside him, mouths trickling from visions of the haunches of venison, the sides of beefs, the giggots of mutton, by now chilling in the royal lodgings prepared at Dogmersfield, saw no virtue whatever in the starched nonsense of the dons. "The infanta is not in Spain now; this is Henry's England, and he may do what he wills. He is no basilisk, to chill the miss to marble; no volcano, to sear her with a glance."

"I will to see her," scolded the king.

The bewildered grandees agreed at last. This point settled, off they set out for Dogmersfield, the king reining ahead, with his son the intended bridegroom far behind on the storming downs.

The princess and her ladies had already sensibly fled from the rain, several hours before.

The king came to the door of the infanta's apartment. An Iberian count, an archbishop, a bishop stood haughtily before him here. "It is impossible; the lady infanta has retired to her chamber."

"By God, I mean to see and speak to her, though she lie in bed with no more cover than a fig-leaf. Why else do you think I am here?"

More parley and faddling. Poor little infanta, she was in bed, tired out and drenched to the skin as she had been. Up she got, with a long sigh, and had herself attired in the stiff royal garments again; and, so prepared, she received his Tudor highness.

Henry's ruffled face smoothed to appreciation. "By God, she is a comely wench! Send out for that tardy son of mine; this sight is better than all the rain in Christendom."

He himself retired, to doff his wet riding tire for drier comfort, and proceeded to introduce his backward son to the princess. Lip to lip the young people pledged their troth; and then the Tudors retired with the hungry English lords and the rumpled cavaliers from the South to the postponed supper.

What she had seen had piqued the curiosity of the princess; never imagine that she went back to bed. She sent her word to the blustering English monarch and his son; and, after the roaring banquet was over, and heads were swimming in English ale pledged to the future happiness of the prince, the infanta, the king, the queen, the king and queen of Spain, the pope, the parish priest, England, Spain, the world, and anything else that came to mind, the little princess received her pledged lover and his royal father in her own apartments.

They might like to hear her Spanish minstrels, she said. Indeed they did; with seemly behavior and courtly manners all solaced their fatigue and irritation with courtly dancing.

Arthur, either through ignorance of the Spanish dances, or because of some prescript of etiquette, did not dance when the infanta and her damsels had the floor. Later he led out the Lady Guilford, governess to his sister Mary, later a queen of France, and trod the measure right pleasantly with her.

A quiet little youth, just ten years of age, saw all this with interested eyes. His name was Henry, and he too was son of the Tudor king. Ten years old . . . . and how exquisite the fair blossom of Aragon looked, in such approving young eyes!

CHAPTER III

A Royal Bedding

HENRY TUDOR, the son of the king, had pleased his father's eye from the first. He was always over the average in height, resembling the lusty dead grandfather, fourth Edward; he was stocky, powerful of limb and chest, sun-natured and thoroughly kingly. Pity the soberer sapling, Arthur, was the firstborn. Well, the church it must be, for this aspiring youngster. Long before he could pronounce the honors properly, he was named duke of York, viceregent of Ireland, and by varied other resounding titles.

The church . . . . a cheap road to glory, determined Henry the father. It was rich enough; his revenues, and the public charge, would be spared the expensive upkeep of a prince; and there was room enough for high flight among Peter's children. Let him learn everything: all this new folde-rol from Italy, the dead speeches with the living, music, priestcraft, until he was a very scholard. He would be a man in any case, no doubt of that.

Who for a tutor? Who but Master John Skelton, a sober gentleman in his forties, with degrees in rhetoric from Oxford, Cambridge, Louvain; translator of Cicero and Diodorus Siculus, and one of these poet fellows, who had spilled forth his rounded verse on the death of the boy's Yorkist grandfather, and when Percy of Northumberland died. He was a pet of the king's own mother, Margaret Beaufort, countess of Richmond. And so Master John Skelton received the royal appointment, and began to stuff the young prince's head with all the learning of the world.

For his sake the tutor wrote a *Speculum principis;* and, to the young princely scholar, the great Erasmus, in 1500, dedicated a resounding ode. A scholard among the Tudors at last . . . .

A scholar he was, a linguist, a musician, and most of all an athlete. He went to field to hunt the deer, and to harden his body; "for deer to hunt and slay, and see them bleed, an hardness giveth to his courage." And he was ten years old already, and already in the line to be a prince of the church, archbishop of Canterbury, and as far higher as he could push. And now he was being attired all in white satin, in his beloved London, to squire the Spanish princess to St. Paul's, as his brother's groomsman.

On the day after the conferences at Dogmersfield, the infanta had reached Chertsey, to sleep in the royal palace there. A month later, she proceeded to Kingston on Thames, where Buckingham met her, and the earl of Kent, and the abbot of Bury. On the ninth of November, these escorted her with a splendid train of attendants to her own lodging, in Kensington palace, close to Lambeth.

Three day's later was Saint Catherine's day—the holy day of her patroness. Duly squired, she made her solemn entrance by London bridge, with the young Henry, duke of York, at her side, and was conducted in great pomp to the cathedral. The streets were bright with the gayest attire of the commonalty; the very conduits running, as if in Cana, with Gascon wine instead of water. The nobles flung largess like Tamerlanes, and wore each a manor on his back, in costly furs and cloth of gold. The princess was lodged for the night in the bishop's palace, adjoining St. Paul's.

Morning came . . . . the morning of the mating of the glory of Spain with the conquering might of England. The young duke of York led the dazzling princess to the altar, where stood his brother, garbed too in white satin.

Princess Cecilia bore the infanta's train, and behind her stood a hundred ladies of high rank. The king, the pale rose-queen of York, the king's venerable mother, were high in a gold-latticed box near the center of the cathedral, near the elevated mount where the participants stood. Before bride and groom stood the archbishop of Canterbury, pronouncing the solemn words of the sacrament; and, to aid him, nineteen bishops and mitred abbots stood at his side.

Out to the courtyard, with all the world marching by in holiday attire, with the glitter of mounted chivalry, the roars of approval, the bright blare of the trumpets, the heartening salvos of great guns. Within the courtyard, in the episcopal palace, a sumptuous feast had been set for the prince and the princess.

"And now for the bedding," chuckled the king to the lords and ladies massed beside him. "There'll be something done this night, if that lad is true son of mine!"

"And he only fifteen, the poor laddie!" coming wistfully from a titular maid.

"In his sixteenth year, froward mistress," as the king chucked her in the bodice. "And a Tudor. He's been married five years to her already; weren't you at Bewdly, when the Spanish ambassador stood proxy for the queenly little wench? You were, you darling!"

Out of the general laugh, her low curtsy. "I was ten then, your majesty. If I was darling to you then, you found my taste was only for the bottle, I fear."

A dapper lordling strutted up. "If Prince Arthur needs a proxy tonight, sire . . . ."

A roar silenced him. Up went the Tudor's arm. "I have that post, if need arise. Come, Archbishop, for the blessing of the bed . . . ."

Into the bedroom of state they trooped: the king striding ahead, with his mother, the countess of Richmond, not

far behind; the awed young couple; the stately archbishop, with bishops and mitred abbots in his train; and all of the court who could crowd in: Lord and Lady Fitzwater, the limping old duchess of Norfolk, much of the rank and title of jocund England. And after them, a quiet little youth, just ten years of age, saucer eyes and spread ears drinking it all in.

"Fail not to bless the sheets too, your grace. They're virginal sheets; and they'll blush tonight, if there's Tudor blood in that son of mine, and virgin blood in this new buxom daughter."

The prince of the church drained the goblet in his hand, passed it yawning to a page, and lifted his hand for the archepiscopal blessing. The solemn chant droned forth . . . . The distant roar of the crowd, hardly a muttering undertone here within the palace . . . . gulps as wine went down, squeals and giggles from the maids . . . . and Henry's voice bulling over all.

"There's Holy Writ for all our good old English ways —is it not so, your grace? Did not Absalom bed his wives in view of all Israel?"

"No, no," a chuckling abbot took him up. "It was ten of David's wives that the son took in the sight of the people, on the very roof of the royal palace!"

The dapper lordling again: "Surely the prince will need a proxy, if all that is toward in this one night!"

"No, my friend, no. These feet are big enough for any shoe; I'll play Absalom, in this court, if any do!"

Here was the poet, with the nuptial song. His mincing tones shrilled high over the inordinate clatter of the bed chamber, as the maids disgarbed the princess in an adjoining room, and as Arthur prepared himself, with his attendants, in a third room. A shrill, high voice, with some of the words piercing the rollicking hubbub:

Night now hath watched her precious self half-blind,
Yet not a single maidenhead resigned!
Could yonder rounded moon the sweets
Have, promised to your nuptial sheets,
She'd leave her sphere
To be welcomed there!

"Ah!"—a roar of approval, as the maid is led forth.

"Gently, gently," an old duchess advised. "Enter gently; the tumbling comes soon."

"Behold the bridegroom!" declaimed a courtier, as Arthur, fidgetting at the blare of public notice, sidled toward the canopied bed.

The poet shrilled on:

O shameless Venus! thou, to whom is known
The surest way how to unloose the zone
Of blushing virgins, tell the maid
This is no hour to be afraid!
Come front to front,
And an end on 't!

"—That all the world may know that this night a lawful heir to the heir of the throne of England shall be engendered in this bed . . . ."

"No, not now, God's mercy!" a staccato whisper from a thrilled maid.

Again the poet:

To bed, kind turtles, for love's eager fight,
And may Love grant an overflowing night!
May forehead, lips, and perfumed breast
Lead softly to the phoenix' nest.
Come, unto her,
To undo her!

May all the pandering stars y-looking on,
Fish-like, increase ye to a million!
And from this amorous conflagration
Spring kings to rule Our Lady's Nation,
Sprung from the fire
Of dame and sire!

Well, they were let sleep at last; while proxy brief nuptials honored the event in this and that convenient coign of the palace, and nearby buildings.

Almost a week the ceremonies lasted; and all of this week the young prince and his bride slept side by side, at least part of each night, in the episcopal dwelling. Then to another palace in London; and then to Ludlow castle, built before the Normans came, on the wooded height above the mating of the Teme and the Corve.

Arthur the bridegroom was a healthy youth, ruddy-cheeked, gay-hearted; Catherine the bride had begun to flower into that stately dark beauty that later made her the toast of Europe for queenliness. In the Shropshire air her queenliness vanished: she was the girl again, as she had been in the jasmined walks of the Alhambra; the days were rosy, and the nights rosier. Through great Ludlow castle the young pair gambolled, slowing their steps to sedateness in the circular Norman chapel that had been added to the earliest structure, gay again in the rooms of state and later additions. Side by side they stood before the east window of St. Lawrence's, and gazed at the glassy martyrdom. They rollicked up Vinnal Hill together to its crest, and even up Titterstone Clee.

They held their little court too, modelled after Westminster . . . . prince and princess . . . . man and wife . . . . future king and queen.

"Ye're young to be beddin' such a fine strappin' wife," an old attendant chuckled at the prince.

"She was ripe, but she hushed her 'More!' before cock-crow, I warrant you!"

"Ay, but since . . . ."

"She's been a changed girl, after that first night. A Tudor draws first blood, in any quarrel, remember."

"A bit of a delicate appetite, hasn't she?"

"God's mercy! She split her fast, this very morning, on a chine of beef, a platter of salted herrings, with kilderkins of mustard to sauce it, and washed the whole down with a gallon of brown October ale. Delicate? She eats like the giant of Land's End!"

The blasting winter yielded to the first thaw—a cold, chilling thaw. Of a sudden the plague stole by night into the pleasant castle; and by nightfall the prince, the young husband, was on his back, fighting for his life. No Tudor fights well so; and, before the third day of April, a grimmer bride had claimed him: no virgin this time, but a wearied dark adept at a quieter tumbling. And little Catherine, "Donna Catalina," found herself a widow, with a scant six months of young married bliss behind her.

Henry the Tudor king took the blow on his feet. He called the little scholar of eleven before him. "Well, Arthur's ended; but there's no lack of Tudor blood to fill this seat I hold. There'll be no monk's robes for you, my son."

Henry the son shrugged his filling shoulders. "I wanted to be a priest, father."

"I'll make you a king, instead. By God, I'll wed you to Catherine, Arthur's widow, as well! I'd like to wed her myself . . . . That's more than priesthood could do for you!"

"But—my brother's wife?"

"Didn't Isabella, Catherine's sister, wed five full years ago with Emanuel of Portugal, after her first husband, his brother Alphonso, died? Didn't Emanuel marry her own sister Maria, another of Catherine's sisters, three years after, when Isabella had died? There are always ways, in this world. That's what priests and popes are for, to smooth out the troubles of others. You like the wench, don't you?"

"She is the most lovely woman my eyes have seen."

"You'll see more of her, little Henry! Leave that to me."

"But—her father and mother—"

Henry the king laughed quietly. "Ferdinand is as cold as a chilled herring, and as crafty as a weasel. By God, he'd mate her to the untombed corpse of Gloucester, if that would weld Spain and England tightlier together. Let me see . . . . A courier to Ferdinand; his wife would not smile so easily on the match. And one to Pope Alexander, if he can find time to listen to word of mine, while Lucrezia is around. I'll make him listen; or I'll let loose such a stench, that all Christendom shall reek with it. Henry the Eighth—that is to be your tomorrow."

The boy reflected. "I had wanted to be a priest."

"You can buy and sell all the priests you have a heart to, my son. Popes, too. Money's the philosopher's stone, now and ever. But a king is in the blood—with the queenly Spanish maid for your bedmate."

"As you will, father."

CHAPTER IV

His Majesty, the King

ARTHUR had died in April of 1502; and the shrewd king's plans for the disposal of the stately Spanish widow went smoothly, although tardily, ahead. After all, there were many things on the king's scheming mind. Young Henry was eleven; Margaret, his sister, was two years older: time to get her mated, on the slippery altar of statecraft. It was the fourth James of Scotland that she must marry, whether he wished it or not: was not the sealing of eternal peace of more import than a parricide prince's rutting, or a little girl's dreams . . . .

Parricide . . . . When this James Fourth had been born, far back in 1473, a dozen years before Isabella had borne Catherine in the camp at Alcala de Henares, the event had filled his father with shivering forebodings. The planets spelled trouble for the father; and third James held astrology as holy as Holy Writ. Moreover, the king was wakened out of a horrid dream, which the wisdom of the Scottish court interpreted to mean that "the Royal Lion of Scotland would be torn to pieces by his own whelps." From that moment, the father had looked askance at the son. He had affianced the boy, when the child was barely two, to the Princess Cecilia, daughter of old Edward IV of England, father of the pale rose of York. But the dowry payments that England was pledged to pay were large; and third James rode badly, and more and more let black magic replace all else in his regard. Negotiations for this match were broken off, while James's banished brother sought the discarded hand of the English princess, rebelled in Scotland,

was defeated, escaped to France, and died in a tournament there. Third James sunk lower and lower into his preoccupation with devil-worship, and into the clutches of a mistress uncharitably described as "Daisy, a naughty harlot." His queen died; the barons rose, with the sixteen-year-old son among them; the king fled from a defeated field, and was thrown and injured by his fleet gray charger. One of his pursuers volunteered to confess the injured monarch, and gave him the sacrament with a dagger. Thus James the Fourth came to a bloodstained Scottish throne.

Young as he was, the young monarch carried with him, on his slow journeys throughout his realm, Lady Margaret Drummond, whom he had grown to love. He proposed to marry her; his mature advisers, minds set on statecraft, opposed the match, and held it incestuous, because, a hundred and fifty years before, a Drummond miss had married the great-great-grandfather of James. The king sent for a dispensation; it came tardily, and he would not wait. A hasty private ceremony was held, for the noblewoman was already with child. Soon after the ceremony, the baby was born. To the outer world, James was still a bachelor; hence it was that Henry Tudor of England sent insistent offers of the hand of his daughter, Margaret. Meanwhile, the bloody Drummonds, of the family of Lady Margaret, had resumed a feud with the Murrays, and had roasted to death a hundred and twenty of the latter clan, by burning a heather-roofed church in which the Murrays had taken refuge.

This made Scotland hate the Drummond woman all the more; and a slight quarrel between England and Scotland made the Scottish nobles demand that their king yield to the Tudor's offer. He agreed, if only he could have a respite of a year and a half with his beloved Margaret Drummond. A brief time; but long enough. One morning the unacknowledged wife went with her sisters, Sybilla and

Euphemia, to mass. A few hours later, all three died. Poison had been placed in the sacramental wine—this was the common belief. There were enough Scotchmen willing to go this far to keep another bloody Drummond from the throne. There was Lady Janet Kennedy, a Scotch rival of Margaret. Nothing was proved; and a few brief entries in the Treasury accounts of Scotland put the period to the story:

> Item, to the nurse that brought the King's daughter from Drummyne to Strivilin, £. 3, s. 10.
> Item, for a horse to ride to Edinburgh to warn the king of the dying of one of his bairns, 5s . . . .
> For a winding sheet for the said bairn, 2s.
> Item, to the priests of Edinburgh for to do dirge and soul mass for Margaret Drummond, £. 5.

Until the days of his death this last entry reappeared. No more need for delay; one Margaret was gone; bring on the other, and he would marry her within fifteen days.

Henry Tudor's counsellors shook grizzled heads. "No, sire, it is not wise. Should your son die, England would be saddled with an alien prince. Scotland might swallow England!"

The king shook his shrewd head. "The smaller is ever swallowed up within the larger. It is a wise mating."

The very year that Prince Arthur died, the solemn betrothal took place at Richmond. The earl of Bothwell stood proxy for the Scottish king, all of sixteen years older than his little bride. The bishop of Glasgow propounded the question: "Are you, Princess Margaret, of your own free will, and without compulsion, content to wed the king my master?"

"If it please my lord and father, the King, and my lady-mother, the Queen, I am content," answered the little girl.

The king and queen said that it was their will, and gave

their blessing to the kneeling child. Bothwell formally accepted her as the wife of the Stuart. And she was all of twelve years old. Hand-in-hand with her mother she walked to the great banquet that had been set. With the morning, the queen-mother of York, paler than before, set herself to giving her little daughter a queenly trousseau. The chroniclers demanded every detail of the gown of tawny cloth-of-gold, of the purple velvet gown, of the gown of state furred with more than three thousand ermine skins. Two petticoats the princess had, two hats, six pairs of woolen hose and five knitted, six pairs of slippers and three pairs of shoes, two dozen gloves, and twelve thousand pins. Such was a queen's trousseau; and, as the finishing touches were given to it, on a frigid mid-February day of 1503, the queen-mother died, in giving birth to another daughter.

And so the poor little homesick princess was godsped off to Scotland, and Henry the king could turn to the affairs of son Henry, now duke of York, and heir to the throne. The Borgia pope was dead, of his own poison; Pius the Third had died of an unknown disease after twenty-six days in Peter's chair; Julius II, boasting that he had bought up all the voices of the sacred college, had been elected as God's vicar. He had been a sailor; a pirate, who sold captured girls to the Turks; he had daughters, to marry to the princes of Italy. Such a man, the shrewd English king decided, would listen to kingly reason. Against the opposition of the cardinals, on the day after Christmas of 1503, His Holiness published the bull of dispensation against the incest involved in Catherine's marrying the second brother.

Six months before, the formal betrothal had taken place, at the house of the bishop of Salisbury, in Fleet Street. The Spanish girl had not been too tractable. "I do not wish it," she told her father's ambassador.

"But why? There is—there will be no bar. The Pope . . . ."

"I have a distaste for it all—with that boy! For years I must stay unmarried; it is very inconvenient. Mother has not consented, as yet."

"She will. And your father commands it."

"Well . . . ."

And so they were betrothed. Within a half year, the pope spoke; and Isabella of Spain at last gave her consent, forwarding this to the daughter along with an authenticated copy of the papal bull.

Within a year Isabella of Spain had died, and her daughter, Joanna the maid, with her husband, Philip of Hapsburg, took the throne. Within a few months of that event, the Hapsburg and his bride, sailing from the Netherlands to Spain, were weather-driven upon the English coast.

When Henry the king saw her, his eyes narrowed. "That," he said, "is the woman I should have married." Joanna was twenty-five now, and Henry almost twice her age; but what bar was that to a king's desire? "Pity the days of David and Solomon have passed, when a king could wive as freely as he can love today."

"The princess has one husband, sire."

"So did Bath-sheba," retorted the king. "But this is the modern world, and such things have passed. I need a wife; and she is such a woman as any man would choose. Nevertheless . . . ."

When Isabella died, with her son John dead, and her eldest daughter Isabella dead, and the second Isabella's infant son Miguel of Portugal dead, Joanna was called to the throne. Within two years, Philip of Hapsburg was dead, and Joanna reigned alone.

Henry the king sent for his son, Henry, duke of York, prince of Wales, taller than most men, broad-shouldered,

fully grown. "My son, I have determined to marry the queen of Spain."

The son laughed, ruefully. "Sire, there is talk already of my affiancement to Catherine, poor Arthur's wife . . . ."

"Talk? Have you stooped to listen to talk?"

The son nodded gloomily. "My ears are with my feet—on the ground. Two of your sons are to marry the same woman; and now you offer to marry her womb-sister. Warham—"

"A pest on that meddling archbishop! I had you in mind for the see of Canterbury once . . . . He came to me with his talk, even after Julius gave us the bull of dispensation. He came to me with talk—" the king looked even more sternly at the prince, "—of blood over the moon, at the marriage of Catherine and Arthur. You are old enough to know how needful such things are. There was Perkin Warbeck in the Tower—son of a Flemish burgess, but greeted by the kings of the world, and wedded by your sister Margaret's husband to a Scottish noblewoman. There was Warwick in the Tower—the last York left alive, save for my then queen—God grant mercy to her soul," and he crossed himself devoutly. "What was I to do?"

"Ferdinand said—" prompted the prince, ears eager.

"Yes. I have told you. There must be no chance that a son of York could sit on the throne of Albion. And so, blood was shed, to sate the Spaniard's insatiable blood-lust. He is a man, and men are all of that ilk, my son. But to taunt me with this, as Warham of Canterbury did—"

"Yet many hold with him."

"May their bodies rot living, and their souls burn forever! By God . . . ." And then a shrewd far-away look crossed his face, returned, and lingered there. "Well, you may be righter than I. It is true—" his heavy hand fell

across the sturdy knee of the son, "—that your proposed marriage to Catherine is incestuous, is it not?"

"Why, the pope—"

"Ah, we are Christians, my son, and we must have consciences even more tender than the Holy Father himself. Perhaps God sent that bull to tempt us to wrong-doing." He leaned back and roared at the notion, while the prince stared with troubled eyes at the scheming father. Suddenly the king's face grew straight again. "I am going to wed with Joanna; and you are going to protest against marrying Catherine."

"But, father—"

"Blast you for a hard-hearted brat, do you hear me? I say—"

The prince trembled at the storm of rage. Then he plucked up soul, and matched wit against wit. "You gave Catherine, for dower on marrying Arthur, the city of Coventry, the city and townlands of Macclesfield, the castles of Wallingford and Conway and Caernarvon, the worth of a full five thousand pounds per year. For England to lose this—and lose the chance of mating with the royal family of Spain—"

"But I will marry the queen of Spain myself! No, you will sign a protest against the marriage, on the ground that your conscience rebels against marrying the widow of your brother. You have a churchman's learning; you know that the canon forbids such an evil mating. You will sign . . . ."

And Henry the prince signed the paper. He was never at heart with his father's scheme; Ferdinand, father of Joanna, was as opposed; and—so the wise men of the day said—God himself took a hand in the matter, and struck Joanna mad. Henry Tudor flew into a rage at this, and tried by devious ways to find out that the story was but a tale, to keep him from the lady's fair body. No, it was all

too true. Joanna was put away, and Ferdinand came back as regent. The paper that young Henry had signed was carefully hidden away, never having seen the light.

Henry the prince had never been at heart with his father's scheme. The prospect of losing the stately Spanish bride was torture to his obedient young soul; his love for the denied bride grew into a passionate adoration. The shrewd father grew to see this, and had spies put, to keep the two young people apart. The prince was forever nosing about for a clandestine meeting, with a clandestine marriage in his mind.

And then, on the 22nd of April, in 1509, Henry the king died, only two years beyond fifty . . . . died, hated and detested by all in England. He had grown miserly toward the end, his creatures Empson and Dudley squeezing the people on any raked-up pretext that the old statutes afforded. He died, leaving an eighteen-year-old giant to succeed him: a scholar, a musician, the first knight of Europe in the tourney, a poet and the peer of poets.

Henry the new king sent for the Spanish ambassador. "I will to marry my affianced bride without delay," he announced. "I desire and love her beyond all women on earth. Do you, Fuensalida, prepare papers confirmatory of her dowry. Heads will fall, if there is delay in this!"

And then he went to Catherine. He spoke what was on his mind; and her wide eyes lifted in delight toward her knightly young lover.

CHAPTER V

Second Ploughing

DOWN went their names to the deed of dowry: Catherine, as princess of Wales; Fuensalida, as ambassador; Ferdinand, as king of Aragon; mad Joanna, as queen of Castile. This was ornately dated June 7, 1509, amid elegant scrolls of the pen. No heads fell—as yet; the marriage followed soon enough. Details were posthasted by courier back to Spain.

> Donna Catalina wedded the brother of her first lord, who was called Enrico, in a place they call Grenuche, on the day of St. Bernabo; and was crowned afterwards on the day of St. John, with all the rejoicings in the world.

Greenwich was the place, and June 11th, St. Barnabas' day, the time. Spain went wild at the news: the Moors were out, the Jews were going, England and Spain were wed again, the Americas (the old admiral only three years in his grave) were pouring the world's gold into Spanish coffers. The drums, the trumpets, the mad dance, the djereed—that Moorish tourney, with a splintering of the short lance favored in Persia and Turkey—what a glorious dawnhour for a brighter tomorrow! Here's the Spanish king himself, for all of his nearly threescore years, wielding a djereed like the youngest don in all Iberia. The world was grown a Spanish Paradise . . . .

And merry England . . . . On the 21st of June, the young king and his slightly older queen progressed to the castle of Greenwich, the nobility at their heels. The king, out of his great happiness, created twenty-four knights,

to mark the felicitous day. Two days later, on St. Etheldreda's day, the royal pair proceeded in state through the rollicking streets of London. Each district spread its richest front to the jocund air. Cornhill shone in cloth of gold. On to Old Change, the way lined with maidens, seductively clothed in virgin white, lifting over their roguish eyes palms of white wax. Attending these, and marshalling their movements, were priests in their richest vestments, who censed the queen's progress from swinging silver censers. The air was like a returned Eden, or the throne of grace itself. Never had king and queen of men had such a pageantry as this day's rejoicing.

The queen! Here she comes riding, the stateliest, fairest woman in all of Christendom! She's still a bride, in satin broidered with all the strange flowers of the blossoming world. Her hair, midnight black and ample, hung loose down her satin back, until it brushed her feet. On her head was a coronal, set with all the orient jewels that dead centuries could build and find and shrewdly cut for this hour. Two white horses drew her litter, made of white cloth of gold; and, in her train, all the noblewomen of England, in their splendid whirlcotes, the most fashionable coach of the day. And so to Westminster.

A sudden council of state, from varied demands. Lean sour-visaged Warham is up . . . . Warham, my lord of Canterbury, lord high chancellor of the realm. "I must protest this marriage. There is undue affinity between the contracting parties, since aforetime the brother of our illustrious king, Henry—on whom may God rain years and sons and blessings without stint—did wed and bed this lady."

This is Fox, the wily bishop of Winchester, to give the answer of the king's heart. "Gently, gently, your grace. The head of all Christendom has sanctioned the mating.

We are not children; the needs of the realm demand this alliance with Spain."

Henry glowered from the throne. "By God, if she were my mother, my sister, my daughter all bodied in one, I would have her! The Pope is on my side . . . ."

The queen, at his nod, was on her feet, speaking quietly. She had never been married, in fact, to dead Arthur. The marriage had never been consummated. They were children . . . . Had she not offered her body to the test of these several noble matrons, who could swear on Holy Writ that she was still a maiden? The marriage was much to her liking.

Warham, defeated, embittered, grumbled to all who would listen, "Making virgins is as easy as sewing up a ripped seam. She'd be a virgin after her tenth bedding, if she willed it. Not consummated! It's in the Spanish blood, where sisters and brothers mate like goats or monkeys . . . ."

"Have a care, your grace," whispered a worried counsellor. "Heads have fallen before . . . ."

Next day was the nativity of St. John the Baptist. The young queen herself gave the orders for the coronation, and for the royal entombment of dead Henry Tudor; for the old countess of Richmond, the king's grandmother, was ailing, and Henry was after all a young man still, impatient of kingly duties.

Within a few days, the old countess had followed the first Tudor king to the grave. And a dreadful pestilence swept throughout London; it was so, the wise men of the day asserted, when too many of God's people met together in loose merrymaking. Well, off to Richmond with the court . . . . for pageants, masquing, and like diversions, with the king and queen gambolling like the children they still were.

Within four months, the king performed his first kingly deed, apart from his man's duty to the queen; and she achieved her first gem of queenliness. The people groaned still against the exactions of Empson and Dudley, sycophants of the former king. "No knot to cut, that. Have them beheaded, and straightway; their property reverts at once to the crown."

The queen interceded. Well, what were two heads, when all their treasure had been already drained into the yawning royal coffers? Let them live, if her majesty was joyed thereat . . . .

Summer came, and a royal progress throughout the kingdom. Nowhere he could stop, but the stripped people stood with bowed heads before him, retelling their wide grievances under the cruel exactions of the ministers of the king his father. They must have back what had been taken from them . . . .

But masques and revels, banquets and tourneys, hunts and progresses, were already ditching through the hoarded treasures of seventh Henry. The people clamored: give them blood. Blood they tasted; and it quieted their clamors.

Those who watched the king closely saw that he was not wholly a happy man. No better man-at-arms in the kingdom than this royal giant, no doubt of that; but the tiltyard at Westminster and the barriers at Greenwich were not strong enough food for him. And he was muttering against the church.

"It is all the fault of that rapscallion John Skelton," groaned Warham. "Happy day for England, if his throat had been slit when he lay under Tower roof."

Sub-deacon, deacon, and priest before 1498, four years later saw him under a cloud, within the Tower. He emerged, came into court favor, and soon was packed off as rector of Diss, in Norfolk. But he still had the prince's ear; and he

had much to say in it. When the prince became the king, his words still rang overloudly.

"My poet-laureate," Henry always called him. The king chuckled at the scandal he created in his parish: "Him's more like an actor than a reverend of God," they said again and again. Priest as he was, he had his secret wife living with him in the rectory; and he poured vitriolic vials of satire against the Dominicans, who protested his carnal living. The ladies loved him; had not the maids of the countess of Surrey, at Sheriff Hutton castle, pricked out for him his *Garland of Laurel* in silk and gold and pearls? And his *Merry Tales*—there was a man for you!

Stephen Hawes, groom of the king's own chamber, was a jocund poet:

> And no quarrel a knight ought to take
> But for a troth, or for a woman's sake . . . .

There was modern poetry for you! And the noble singing of man's final conqueror:

> O mortal folk, you may behold and see
> How I lie here, sometime a mighty knight;
> The end of joy and all prosperity
> Is death at last, through his course and might.
> After the day there cometh the long night.
> For though the day hours be never so long,
> At last the bell ringeth to evensong.

But for a real poet, give us Master John!

> Merry Margaret,
> As midsummer flower,
> Gentle as falcon
> Or hawk of the tower;
> With solace and gladness,
> Much mirth and no madness,
> All good and no badness.

Ah, so were women—Master John should know! When he

came to sing of *Colin Clout,* the king shouted aloud his joy at the merry ribald lines:

Men say for silver and gold
Mitres are bought and sold;
There shall no clergy appose
A mitre nor a cross
But a full purse.
A straw for God's curse!
What are they the worse?

Henry's lips curled at thought of the merchandising church of God. *He* would have made it a different church! And Master John's picture of the bishop on his mule—

With gold all betrapped,
In purple and gold belapped . . . .
Their mules gold doth eat;
Their neighbors die for meat.
What care they though Jill sweat,
Or Jack of the Oak?
The poor people they yoke.

"True, true, Master John," with a royal slap upon the rector's back.

Some say ye sit in thrones,
Like princes of the north,
And shrine your rotten bones
With pearls and precious stones;
But now the commons groans,
And all the people moans
For priests, and for loans
Lent and never paid;
But from day to day delayed,
The commonwealth decayed.

"If I had you in Canterbury see—"

"God forbid, your majesty! I am your laureate; I have my rectory, and my Margaret, with maybe a few more

to spice the viand; what would I do, with all men's eyes upon me? No, leave me to my tales and songs—"

"By God, if all men were as wise as you, Master John, this England would be an Eden indeed. Have it your way—"

So Richard Fox, bishop of Winchester, lord privy seal, and hateful Warham, continued to steer the English craft. The Venetian ambassador might call him "the other king" —Fox, that is—and Henry might learn of this, with a sour smile. "He is a fox indeed," Henry grunted incautiously once. "Mated with a vulture. But my father trusted them . . . . And I see, in my butcher's son, the scourge to lash them, when the hour comes."

Skelton reflected upon Master Thomas Wolsey, and smiled. Yes, there was a lash ready, to drive the money-changers forth.

Out of the merrymaking, Henry cast his eyes abroad; but there were still affairs near at home. On the first day of the year 1511, the queen was delivered of a son. The kingly father was overjoyed, and the length and breadth of the land resounded with glad approval. Too hasty, these cheers; before the month had died, the son had died with it.

The year saw also the destruction of a Scottish flotilla near Thames mouth by Lord Thomas and Sir Edward Howard; and saw the emergence of Thomas Wolsey from obscurity to near parity with the king's self. Sixteen years older than the king, he had been born to a butcher of Ipswich—a testy troublemaker, constantly fined for letting his pigs stray in the street, for selling foul meat, for letting his house to mysterious persons for illegal purposes, and for violating the law concerning weights and measures. The son was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and became junior bursar, senior bursar, fellow, and master of the school. He was ordained as priest, and given the living

of Limington in Somerset. Here the sheriff, Sir Amias Paulet, had Wolsey placed in the stocks for some offense; soon enough the churchman retaliated, by confining the sheriff to his chambers in the Temple for fully five years. He became chaplain to the first Tudor king, and in the last year of that monarch's life was named dean of Lincoln.

If he was popular with the father, he became more to the son. Henry, on his accession, named the butcher's son as his almoner; two years saw half a dozen further preferments. By 1511, Henry had tired of the suave pacifism of Warham and Fox. Man was born to fight . . . . So Wolsey went into the privy council, and joined the warlike party of Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey. The turbulent butcher's son turned the tide. In God's name, to end this monotony, let us have war!

England looked abroad, and saw its chance.

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

About 1515 (?)

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery, London

CHAPTER VI

A King's Second Campaign

THERE were at this moment two parties in Europe: the pope, and the French king. The pope was not too happy, as he saw the kings of Europe carving his realm like a roasted fowl. The rich miles of the Two Sicilies, including Naples, belonged to the Spanish crown. The French king had taken rich Milan from the weakened arms of its Sforza lord; the Venetians, freed from their role of watchdog against the Eastern Moslems, strode down the Adriatic coast and split off the northern part of Romagna from the papal lands. Julius first brought these trading republicans to their knees, and granted them an abject peace, at the suggestion of the distant English king. But it was Louis XII of France that he was really after; and, with foxlike shrewdness, he turned next on one of Louis' allies, the duke of Ferrara, a papal vassal, pretending that he had been guilty of a violation of some forgotten feudal rite.

Louis saw the reason behind the attack, and sent his troops from Milan, under Chaumont, who drove the papal forces out of Ferrara, and shut the pope up in Bologna. A troop of Spanish horse temporarily beat off the French; but in the spring they came back, stormed Bologna, sent Julius scurrying off to Ravenna for safety, and caused the Holy Father to summon to his aid the swords of all Christendom, to save him from the insolent attacks of the French.

Europe hated the grasping Frenchman; and so she listened. Venice leagued itself with the pope; Ferdinand

took the field at once; his son-in-law Henry of England, flattered by the pope's grant of the title of "Head of the Italian League" to him, joined in the attack. Maximilian, the emperor in Germany, fell behind the churchly banner. Clarencieux, Henry's king-at-arms, the king's herald, solemnly entered upon French soil, and demanded the restitution of the ancient English patrimony in France, the lost realm won by kinship and marriage and arms. If Louis had granted this, he could hardly have turned around twice in what of France was left him. He refused. Off sailed Dorset, the English soldiers on Spanish transports, for the Guipuscoan coast; the Lord Admiral, with the great fleet, spent the summer cruising along the ocean lane between the two lands.

The European allies prospered, while England suffered. Dorset was kept inactive on Spanish soil, until disease and a mood of mutiny ravaged his men; while the Spaniard took Navarre, and the French enemy took and held Bearn. The English flagship, locked in encounter with the vast French flagship, burned, together with its rival. Never let England hear of this, till the king could launch a greater ship, the *Henry Grace Dieu,* affectionately called the "Great Harry,"—the world's largest ship, and the greatest that man could ever build, as the wise men pointed out.

Pope Julius died, Pope Leo the Tenth was elected. The new pope was cool toward the war; Ferdinand fell away; Venice went further, joining France. Catherine the queen came to her husband, after some words she had heard.

"Is it true, sire, that you have boasted that, since Spain has put you off, you will seek to divorce me, your queen?"

Henry stared moodily at her. Not the woman he had married; time has a way of playing tricks like that. A rose withers quickly; and, God's mercy, she was years older than

he. "I have said no word to you touching this matter, Catherine."

She slipped close beside him, letting her lifting breast say its word to his bent shoulder. "I have been a good wife . . . ."

He stood unstirred beside her. Strange, that touch of her body, not so long ago, would have swung him around, to crush her into a bear's embrace. Time has a way of playing tricks . . . . "Catherine, a good wife, yes. If that were man's goal in life . . . . I wonder how many men would go on their knees to God to end this sterile goodness! Here I'm in the core of the world's beauties, and I let them be, but for a passing tumble or two. Your goodness is corrupting me down to its level. Men dream in their hearts of another crown, less gold than scarlet; of a woman queenly enough to spread her charity, like a foam-nippled sea bare to the tread of the least seeking wind. Men dream—"

"You would not have me, your queen—"

"I would not have you my queen?" he countered quickly. "Clouds race over the mind, as over a blustering sky. Yes, you are Catherine the queen still, and, for your comfort, I have this day bound the Swiss to me, to harass France on the Burgundian side; I have convoyed a hundred and twenty thousand crowns to the emperor, who will buttress the Swiss with eight thousand of his Germans; the Commons are granting me the vast wealth—six pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence from every duke, and so on down to four pence alone from the humblest. I shall go myself under the Gallic sky, and batter insolent French pride down to the dust out of which it upswirled!"

With this she was content. Wolsey held the helm of the land; English youth poured over to Calais. The king loitered, to send the turbulent earl of Suffolk, his near

cousin, to the block: with one of Suffolk's brothers already dead at the encounter of Stoke, upholding the tawdry cause of the imposter Lambert Simnel; with a second brother even now rousing France with the outworn white rose of York. Drawn and quartered and disembowelled, his heart torn out from his still living body . . . . no more trouble there.

"Ay, the butcher's son is the man to victual England on the march," sneered the courtiers privately. But the butcher's son was already nearly as tall, to men's sight, as the giant of a king.

Landing of the British vanguard in the English pale at Calais, under Shrewsbury and Stanley, Derby and Lord Fitzwater, Sir Rice ap Thomas, captain of the light horse, and many more . . . . This was May. The next month saw the king himself embarked, leaving behind him his most dear consort, queen Catherine, as rectrix and governor of the whole realm. In the north the earl of Surrey waited, to pounce on possible Scottish marauders. Four hundred sail of transports conveyed the royal giant, squired by the butcher's son, Buckingham, Lisle, Essex, and all the June flowering of English chivalry; together with twelve thousand men, a vast wagon train, and a strong park of great ordnance, numbering among them the famous pieces called the Twelve Apostles.

"Had Jesus had apostles like these, there would have been no Pilate to send him to his end," flattered the courtiers.

The king smiled, and began scattering the English gold, granted for the prosecution of the war, in carousals, entertainments, pageants, and similar amusements. Therouenne was already being besieged; and midway of July Henry moved in person against it. On the 4th of August, he pitched a magnificent pavilion under the besieged walls. Here came

Lyon, the Scottish king at arms, bearing a warlike challenge from the Scottish husband of the king's sister. It was a letter from the queen of France which woke James to his belated chivalry. Anne sent the king a ring as a token, saying she had appointed him her knight . . . . pleading with him to advance three feet into English soil, his army behind him, and strike a blow for her sake.

Margaret was furiously jealous of this twice-married queen, old enough to be James's mother, dying now of a decline.

"No," her husband snapped back. "I will go, if you weep an ocean to stay me."

Margaret stared somberly at him. "I dreamed of pearls last night; and what is that dream but a foresight of widowhood? I dreamed of seeing your kingly body hurled down a sheer cliff. And here is word that your fleet has never reached France, but is tarrying in Ireland."

James smashed down on the throne chair till the joints creaked. "Let Andrew Wood relieve the faithless Arran; and, from this day forth, let no scion of the house of Hamilton hold heritage in Scotland! I shall summon my army today, each man to bring with him forty days' provisions, as is the custom . . . ."

During the brief wait, the signs grew dark even to James. A weird figure, calling himself St. John, appeared at midnight to the king, bearing word from the Virgin Mary. Margaret's pleadings grew more insistent . . . .

"You are Henry's sister, and I take it ill that wife of mine should place a brother above her lawfully wedded lord," he uttered his irritation. "This much I will do: name you tutrix of our infant son, and point you the way to my hidden treasures, should ill come of this venture."

First the king dispatched Lyon, his herald, to the English king quartered under the cracking walls of Therouenne.

Henry flushed scarlet. "Tell your master he is too puny a minnow to determine my quarrel with France. He holds Scotland under my grant—"

"Sire," began the agitated herald.

"Silent, till I make an end! If he rebel now against me, with God's help, when I return, I will flog him out of the realm he holds!"

"Sire," said the troubled herald, "I am subject to my lord of Scotland. What he tells me I may re-tell to your ears. The commands of others I may not—I dare not—carry to my sovereign lord."

Henry sat down and had an answer scrawled out. The Scottish king was no more than a shadow of his ancestors, who had never kept their faith after reason for breach was found. There was grim warning in the end of the letter.

It never reached James.

Surrey, who had once marched north as escort to Margaret Tudor, turned his steps again that way. But they trod heavily now. Scotland had opened the campaign with brief success on land and sea; but the king tarried, the provisions of the men thinned out, hungry soldiers slipped off to their homes; and the weather was lowering and foul. Even the lairds lost heart, and besought the king to give over his plannings.

"I will fight the English though I fight alone—though the last man of you have sworn to the contrary," stormed testy James. Surrey sent a challenge of battle on a day named, accusing the Scotch king of breaking his faith with Henry.

Surrey found that the king was strongly entrenched. Under cover of mist, he outflanked the other's forces. This sent the great lord of Angus home, his counsels disregarded. The time came when the Scotch were in the advantageous position; the master of artillery begged the king to let him open fire.

"Not till these are placed as well as we, on Flodden Field. Then we will see what Scotland can do!"

Four of a dreary afternoon . . . . The armies joined; the battle lines bent one way and another, victory seeming as far away as the absent sun. In three hours a thousand and a half men had been slain, a third of them English. Night came, and after it morning; and the Scotch were gone, their guns abandoned in flight, the dead piled around them until the brooks were red as the vats of Cana. Scotland's youth were dead. The two sons of Angus, and two hundred of the houses of Douglas, the illegitimate son of James, two bishops, two abbots, twelve earls, thirteen barons, five eldest sons of barons, fifty gentlemen of great distinction, the king himself, were among the dead.

In France, Maximilian arrived with a small force, and wrote himself down as Henry's volunteer. The king had a bridge thrown over the Lys, and on August 16th, he crossed the river in person. The German cavalry, the English horse archers, delivered the first shock. Henry started forward with the main body of the troops. But the French, the veterans of glory on many an Italian field, fell into a panic, and fled at once. This was Guinegate, the "battle of the Spurs." Within a few days the town was surrendered by its despondent commander; and Henry had it razed to the dust, to the last house.

Paris lay before the conquering English arms; but instead the English king turned aside to invest Tournay. Mere folly; but warlike headstrongs are no strangers to folly. There was a three days' delay at Lisle, where archduchess Margaret, regent of Flanders, made merry with the loitering English. Tourney yielded, on the day that word of Flodden Field came to the jubilant English.

"I shall go back to my Catherine," Henry said to a

woman in France, "and give her a kingly buss, lest she fall to wondering what I have been doing so long gone."

The woman untangled herself from the king's arms, and laughed happily. "Fortune for me, that I was in Calais when your majesty landed there!"

"For me, Elizabeth," he answered tenderly. "As a youth, I adored the Spanish lady. But she is constantly ailing, and she has grown old already. She was no more virgin, when I came to her, than you . . . ."

"You would not have the widow of Sir Gilbert Taillebois a virgin, would you?"

"Nor Sir John Blount's daughter a virgin, for too long. No more than a Tudor. We come of good English blood, you and I, fair Elizabeth. If I could have wed such as you . . . ."

She rippled her body on the couch beside him, until it shone like dawn-pink Parian marble to his ravished eyes. "Is not this sweeter, dear sire? One tires of a wife soon enough—or of a husband, God's mercy; but a lover—"

"You adorable little doxy! Well, away from these priceless arms for a brief season of duty; and then, soon enough, business in France will call me back to you . . . ."

Late in the month Henry landed at Dover, and rode posthaste to Richmond, unannounced, to surprise the queen here. If only he could find her engaged in such dalliance as had grown so sweet to him, perhaps he could put her away, and take the English bud to his royal bosom in the sight of the world.

The faithful queen met him with delighted surprise, and melted into his practiced arms. A few nights with the queen, a few days making sure that a house at Jericho, near New Hall, in Essex, was available for the royal mistress, and he went back to France, to resume his second campaign.

CHAPTER VII

The Masquing Hour

HER lord was not with her, the queen reflected, as much as he was wont at first. Matters of state, in France, Essex, and elsewhere . . . . Well, there were always her constant pious devotions, her embroidery, and the chat of her maids.

"Your first lord, Prince Arthur, may God shield his soul in Paradise, was a goodly lord; but the king his majesty is goodlier," maid after maid would assure the queen. Several of them had reasons of their own for being sure of this.

"Why, even the king's masques and pageants surpass aught seen in all Christendom," another would choral.

"Though the masquing, at your majesty's marriage with the first prince, was notable. I was there, your majesty—a little girl then."

"Not so little," in envious banter from the first maid.

The oldest among them glared stiffly, and then relaxed. "I mind the great pageant of a mountain, a castle, and a ship, while your majesty sat beside the prince on the royal dais. A grand mountain it was—"

"I had never seen greater," smiled the queen.

"And the ship, with the mariners all speaking right loudly in seamen's talk. Then the gloriously lit castle, with eight fresh gentlewomen seated within, each looking out of a several window. It was a sight for a queen!"

The youngest maid crept closer. She was a bit affrighted to come too near the queen, since Henry had cornered her in an empty closet in the palace. This the queen must guess, from her lifting color when the king's name was spoken.

But, after all, she had done no more than other maids at court had done; and a girl had to learn life in some hour. For all of her fright at the queen's possible displeasure, she must add her moiety to this tale. "There were great beasts drawing the castle, I have heard—"

"Ay, gold and silver lions, harnessed with great gold chains, each lion having a man in the fore end of him, and a man in the hind end of him. And a figure put for the queen sat within the castle, much courted by two mummers who dubbed themselves Hope and Despair—"

"Nay, Hope and Desire," corrected the queen slowly. "There was no talk of despair then . . . ."

After a little silence, the oldest maid spoke again. "That was but the first pageant. In the evening, it was a massy rock, drawn by three sea-horses, bearing up mermaids, and a man-mermaid in armor. Inside each mermaid was one of the sweet-voiced children of the king's chapel, singing quaint harmonies."

"And then," the queen broke in brightly, "out of the rock upflew white doves, and outleapt live rabbits, which did fly and run about the hall, with the courtiers and the maids pursuing them, till I was like to split my bodice with young merriment. It was a goodly show!"

"But Henry is more sportive than the other prince, your majesty. That day he came upon you, with Essex and others, garbed in the likeness of doughty Robin Hood and his men, what a merry to-do there was then!"

"And at Shrovetide—I myself mind me of this—his majesty and Essex came upon the ambassador's banquet like very Turks, with Wiltshire and Fitzwater masqued as salvage Russians, and Sir Edward Howard and Sir Thomas Parr in the fashion of Persians—a marvellous masquing!"

The queen smiled. "Even the torchbearers were sooted up to be Moors; and the princess Mary, the king's sister,

danced as an Ethiop queen, behind a masque of black gauze."

"And once, majesty, your champion at the tourneying at Westminster was a poor hermit, with gray gown and lowly weeds—"

The queen laughed lightly. "I marked the features of Charles Brandon, for all of his palmer's robe. Off with his robe, in one wide gesture, and Brandon's self stood splendid in his proof. That was a delicate device! Sir Thomas Knevet—" And then, without more words, the queen commenced a laughing, at which all the maids joined in.

"You were all there," she said to them, "but for this young sprig," laying her hand on Henry's most recent prize, the youngest maid of them all. "It was Westminster garden; and all would have gone well, with the king's self in the masqued dancing, but that the golden arbor was rolled back, to let the commonalty of England see the royal sports. When the nearest of these stinking-breathed vulgar saw the gold leaf on the arbor near their twitching fingers, it was grab this, filch that—"

"I saw one woman with her skirts to her neck, all crammed with fragments of the gold!" laughed the oldest maid.

"And then poor Henry invited us—the court ladies—to come forward and pluck the gold letters off the attire of the dancing nobles—and what a surprise he met, when all the commonalty rushed in instead! They grabbed the nobles in their arms, they even hoist up Henry, and plucked this, seized that, till they were bare as plucked capons!"

"Not the king, majesty! As a plucked cockerel, perchance—"

Catherine smiled assent. "I am very corrected. Our jewels went—even my own! Henry had naught on but his doublet and his drawers, when they set him down again;

and poor Sir Thomas Knevet—" She could not proceed, for laughing.

"I saw him as he climbed the pole, the vulgar dogs hanging to his attire like very dogs on a bear."

"Not a stitch he had on, when they were through! There he was, his fat body plastered to the pole, below his frightened face, his clawed thighs like two red moons clinging for safety, by means of his unhandsome bared legs, to the pole. What a mad riot that was!"

"Just before the battle of the Spurs, that was—Guinegate, where the French used only their leg weapons in the whole day's encounter," glossed a quiet matron sitting by.

"Ay, Henry is the most masquing and pleasure-making monarch in God's sweet world! There was the blue ballet on New Year's night; there was the great Maying, with the archers of the guard garbed as outlaws, who captured all of you—"

"I was feared, for a moment," confessed the queen.

"—I noted your majesty's face, trust me for that. And then to the woodland feasting, in an oaken bower. Then the great car on the ride home, pulled by five horses, each ridden by a fair damsel—the horse Heat, with the lady Humid upon him; the horse Memeon, with the lady Green on his back; the horse Phaeton, bearing the lady Vegetive; the steed Rimphon, with the lady Pleasaunce; and the horse Lamplace, ridden by the damsel Sweet Odor. In the car was the lady May, and the lady Flora—all bursting into sweet song at the foot of Shooter's Hill, and carolling hymns all the way back to Greenwich Palace. That was the most notable pageant my eyes have seen!"

"And, at the end of the day, Henry and Suffolk riding a race on great dray-horses from Flanders, the first such sport our land has ever seen—"

"There was an Ill May Day, not so much to my liking,

when the poor prentice lads lost their heads, and the poet made his ballad."

"Sing it, Margaret," ordered the queen.

In a right sweet voice the maid complied:

"What if," she said, "by Spanish blood
Have London's stately streets been wet;
Yet I will seek this country's good,
And pardon for their children get."

"Your majesty did as much."

"I could do no less. Proceed, my dear."

The maid went on:

"Or else the world will speak of me,
And say Queen Catherine was unkind;
And judge me still the cause to be,
These young men did misfortune find."
And so disrobed of rich attires,
With hair unbound, she sadly hies,
And of her gracious lord requires
A boon, which hardly he denies.

"The lives," quoth she, "of all the blooms
Yet budding green, these youths, I crave;
O let them not have timeless tombs,
For nature longer limits gave."
In saying so the pearled tears
Fell trickling from her princely eyes,
Whereat his gentle queen he cheers,
And says, "Stand up, sweet lady; rise.

"The lives of them I freely give—"

"He did," murmured the queen gratefully.

"No means this kindness shall debar;
Thou hast thy boon, and they may live,
To serve me in my Boulogne war."

No sooner was this pardon given,
  But peals of joy rang through the hall,
As though it thundered down from Heaven
  The queen's renown amongst them all.

For which, kind queen, with joyful heart,
  She heard their mothers' thanks and praise;
And so from them did gently part,
    And lived beloved all her days . . . .
But now the watch, ordained by law,
  We see on May Day's eve at night,
Is kept to fill the youth with awe,
  By London bands, in armor bright.

"It is a goodly song. I would I had Henry here himself, and could hear him sing it."

The maids looked with heightened color, one to the other. Each for her own reasoning wished Henry too were here. There were rumors of what he did in France, and in Essex . . . .

"He is a fairer prince than France: no doubt of that, madam. His head is the color of gold; when he has a young beard toward, it too is golden. As is his majesty's heart," said the oldest maid.

"And how he can wrestle, hurling to ground the stoutest champions in England, no matter their condition! He can outride a dozen horses; my lord Fitzwater told me he had ridden down eleven in one day, all stationed at different posts,—and Henry no sooner wearing down one that he had leapt off its back, vaulted to saddle of the next, and without loss of stride was off to the chase again."

Catherine nodded. "Even on days when he attends the chase, he goes to mass three times. On ordinary days, he hears five masses. He is the most devout prince in Christendom."

"He prays well, and he bowls better," said one wasp-tongued maid. "I love to see him, his fair skin within a fine

shirt, all wringing wet with sweat. Ay, he'll teach the French a thing or more!"

Catherine shook her head, not too pleased. "England is wide enough for his ambition, I am sure of that. I myself heard him say to the French ambassador, in former days, that we of England were well content with our islands, and sought no more."

"He said it, madam; but mayhap he has changed."

"Men change," said Catherine, a trifle sadly.

She lifted her eyes to her glass, on the wall, and might have said another thing: that women change too. But she did not say it.

She saw that she was lovely; and all of the maids saw this too. But she saw herself with many eyes—the eyes of a little girl, the eyes of the young wife of Arthur, the eyes of the oldening wife of Henry. There were lines about her face, and a faint whimper of gray among her black locks. No need to worry yet; but Henry was younger, and a very bull for desire. She could never be sure how many of these very maids that chatted so gently with her might not have known the king in dark secret hours. Well, it was so with kings; there was no danger to her, save a slight prick to her pride that he might do what she could never do; and this did not seem quite just of the good God that made man and woman not too unlike the other.

She rose, the better to survey herself in the glass, the maids forgotten. Face oval, features regular, a soaring forehead . . . . large dark eyes, bright brown complexion . . . . and a few wisps of gray in her hair.

She stepped farther away, so that the gray grew black again, and the face grew younger. It was so, she told herself, she must be, in his eyes. Her five-cornered hood cap was richly gemmed; the back mantilla rippled downward from the cap at both sides, as Spanish ladies were wont to

wear it; and her throat and waist were empearled and rubied, above the dark blue velvet of the robe. The train swept softly away with the fur of sables; the sleeves, slashed at the wrists, were straight, but for their ruffles. Over all hung the great sable sleeves, the rebras . . . . No small chit, but a very queen for size . . . . No king could turn long from such a woman.

This was what the world saw, and Henry saw. There was more that Henry saw, and the world did not see: the habit of the Franciscans, of the third order, evermore worn beneath her queenly garb. And beneath that was what he most sought and wooed to see, when he came smiling to her: what the world should never see . . . . the body of a goddess . . . .

And yet the king could, for the moment, desert all of this bodily splendor for tavern wenches, gutter doxies, mere trulls. The court maids were better; but he was not finikin in his choice, she had heard too truly. Maids who swore like seafarers, and belched in drinking like bishops. It was not well to have a king so catholic in his loving.

Well, he was young; he would outgrow such dalliance. Meanwhile, it was past the hour for devotions . . . . And she had her sins to confess—a dropped stitch in her embroidering, a quick word to a stumbling attendant . . . . She must bring these before the eyes of Almighty God, that she might with clear heart greet his majesty when next he came home from these tiresome trips abroad.

CHAPTER VIII

Queens on the Bargain Counter

SCOTLAND at first would not believe that its James had died, though his body had been picked up in the red mire of Flodden, with a gaping arrow wound in his breast, and a fearful gash from a brownbill on his head. Wild stories thronged the northern air: a footsoldier had seen the king riding away after the battle; another had marked his disfigured body, amid eleven dead earls; another told that he had seen a cannon ball fall where the king stood, and crush him. A story awoke, that he had been captured and smuggled away by the English. This story was embroidered: he had escaped from his captors, and was now a palmer in the Holy Land, praying at Christ's tomb for the souls of his dead nobles.

All the time, the body of James lay, lead-enwrapped, above English soil. James had died under sentence of excommunication from the pope, for his broken faith with England; and no man, not even the king, dared place the body underground, till the Holy Father gave leave. When the delayed permit came at last, Henry was busy elsewhere, or doubted the identity of the decayed corpse; and it was left to lie among the lumber at the Carthusian Monastery at Sheen. Years later a glazier found it, and gave it humble burial with the bones from the Charnel House, in Great St. Michaels. But none of this troubled the dead king; there were no dreams now to plague his stirless slumbering.

Margaret Tudor, Henry's sister, was now a widow, barely twenty-six, and in her lusty prime. A Tudor . . . . and the men and women of this breed were apt in loving. By

April of the next year, she was brought to bed of a posthumous son, Alexander, named duke of Ross, who died before the year ended. But already, since she was on the royal marital bargain counter, offers for her hand began to come in. Slightly damaged goods, of course, but still a splendid buy . . . .

The ailing queen of France, whose silly ring-token had sent James to his death on Flodden Field, was dead herself. France proposed that her widower, Louis XII, should mate with the buxom Scottish widow. Henry saw the danger, and acted quickly.

Tournay had not been destroyed, as Therouanne had been. It was retained and garrisoned, and, since it was the seat of a wealthy bishopric, Wolsey was advanced to this dignity. A magnificent entrance into the city had been marked by extravagant festivals, with Margaret of Burgundy and her ladies on hand, with Prince Charles of Castille an honored guest. Charles had been long affianced to Mary Tudor, Henry's sister; this was confirmed, and a marriage projected between the Princess Margaret and the king's favorite, Charles Brandon, Lord Lisle. In honor of the bright eyes of these ladies, Henry and the emperor solemnly jousted, day after day, with Henry almost an invariable winner over all knights.

Back to Lisle, where the Princess Margaret held still more amazing jousts, within a large room, raised high above the ground, with noble steps leading up to it, paved with square black stones like marble. The horses, to save them from sliding, were shod with felt or flocks; and, after the tourneying was ended, the lords and ladies danced, and otherwise disported themselves, until the sun quieted the crowing cocks.

All of this covered another league against France, with Ferdinand promoting it, and the emperor, the English king,

the pope, the duke of Milan, the Swiss, the Florentines, and others colleagued together. The treaty was signed, and Henry spread honors abroad among his glittering knights. Thomas, earl of Surrey, was named duke of Norfolk; Lord Thomas Howard, his son, was created earl of Surrey; Lisle was made duke of Suffolk; Somerset was named earl of Worcester; Stanley was dubbed Lord Monteagle; and, among the other raining honors, the butcher's son, bishop of Tournay, was elevated to the diocese of Lincoln.

And then Ferdinand fell away, and the pope withdrew all his charges against France; the emperor was bribed to desert the cause, by an offer of Renee, daughter of Louis of France, as bride to the emperor's grandson Charles of Spain—the very Charles who was already affianced to Mary Tudor.

When he learned the truth of these matters, Henry roared his angered way throughout the palace at Richmond. "Double-dealing dogs, who break faith with me as a gutter wench tricks her tipsy paramours! By God's grace, they but heat the iron for my hammer! I can deal a trick or two . . . ."

Off he sent word to Louis of France, offering a flattering composition, to be bound by the hand of the lovely princess, Mary Tudor, the girl whom Charles of Spain had just passed over. Mary was sixteen, and a Tudor. She was in love with Charles Brandon, the new duke of Suffolk; Suffolk was halfway affianced to Margaret of Burgundy; Louis was anxious for Margaret Tudor, the Scottish widow. But away with all entangling obligations and emotions, when statecraft called for marital victims!

Louis looked at the little princess, and bowed his head to hide the senile delight in his eyes. Dazzled princess Mary shut her ears to the song in her heart, and lifted her head as if she were queen already The same jointure and dowry

as the late queen were given her; she took with her, to Louis, four hundred thousand crowns as her portion. The soil of France, of Scotland, of England, of the whole world, was black with the dying blood of peasants and nobles, spilt to further the schemes of these overlords; men and women and wee tots were starving slowly to death, for want of a little food; but, above, the world's wealth scattered wildly to the winds, for God is kind to kings and other resplendent fleas on the twitching flanks of the blind old dog, humanity.

Tournay went to England; and a million crowns, as arrears due Henry and his late father; and the troublesome brother of the beheaded former duke of Suffolk was banished to Metz by the French monarch. Henry and his Spanish queen squired Mary to the seacoast in person; and with her went a splendid retinue of attendants and noble ladies, among them a young beauty named Anne Boleyn. Her sister, quite as fair, bade her Godspeed on the dock; and Henry stood aside for a moment, to watch the cordial picture of such English maidens bussing one another. What he thought passed quickly through his mind; it returned later.

The brilliant wedding over, Louis spilt wealth on all of the train, and incontinently shipped them back to England. He did not elect to have bickering, between French and English courtiers, in his court. Among the few allowed to remain was a young beauty named Anne Boleyn. She pleased the king's eye, and some whispered that she pleased more than his eye. She was to please other kings before long.

Francis de Valois, duke of Angoulême, next heir to the French crown, having just before married Claude, daughter of the French king, sought, since the king was so aged, for all of his bride of sixteen years, to give to his royal master proofs of his own knightly valor. Just before the English train departed from Abbeville, he announced that he and nine aids would meet all gentlemen of name and arms, on

horseback and on foot. Five courses at tilt on horseback with sharp spears, and five more at random; and, after this, twelve strokes with sharp swords on foot. After all, a melee at barriers with a handspear and a sword. Suffolk and Dorset, and Dorset's four brothers, were among the responders to the challenge, with its intricate rules and penalties for touching the silver shield and the golden one, the black shield and the tawny one. Suffolk and Dorset were named two of the aids of Francis. He, himself being hurt, placed the two Englishmen at barriers to fight against all comers. In the end, against the intrigues of Francis, who sought to kill the English nobles by employing secretly certain redoubtable champions to fell them, the English returned triumphantly to Richmond, where all England was acclaiming the birth of a prince to Queen Catherine. Soon enough the rejoicing was turned to sorrow; for the heir died, as his brother had done.

Mary was queen of France, for a brief hour. The poor old king grew kittenish, to please his young wife. He had been wont to dine at eight o'clock in the morning; he now delayed his meal until noon, to joy the girl's heart. He had been used to retiring at six in the evening; midnight now often caught him blinking to hold his eyes awake for the gay festivities. And he gave her such service as a prematurely old king of fifty-three could give; and he may have been overfriendly with fair Mistress Boleyn as well. Three months of it the senile king withstood, and then he lay down and died.

Francis took the throne, with his good queen Claude beside him. Henry, perhaps with a reminiscent twinkle in his eyes, sent over, to bear his condolences to his widowed sister, Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, whose heart had always been Mary's.

This pleased Francis excessively. There was always the

danger that Mary might be given as bride to Charles of Spain. He said a word in Mary's ear; and she smiled, and did as was hinted.

She found chance to see Suffolk alone. "You bring me, you say, the condolences of my brother Henry?"

"It is so that kings must speak, when queens are bereaved."

Mary stared across the alien roofs of Paris. "What are kings, but misfits accidentally reared, by birth or some other divine accident, to seats too great for their puny bodies? Not Henry . . . . he *is* a king. But—that Louis!"

Suffolk stared at her, eyebrows knit together. There was a breath of storm in his voice. "Not so did you speak of him, when my word was at your ear, and my heart at your feet, Queen Mary."

"Your word was overquiet for a lover, Charles."

"Overquiet? The French air has sponged your memory, like a sponged slate. I told you that the last ell of me—"

She turned like a vixen on her fellow-countryman. "And you, ogling amorously that Burgundian bitch! Go back to your precious Margaret!"

His eyes were steady, if his heart did pound. "I never loved Margaret of Burgundy, and you know it well. Only you . . . . a king's sister, destined to wed one king, and now, God knows, to wed a greater, if what I hear is true."

"Yes, to wed a greater," she spoke more softly. "A king, and no painted puppet dolled up to smirk and snicker in a regal chair. I shall wed a real king among men, the noblest knight of this age. I shall wed—"

"My heartiest congratulations to your majesty," and he turned, shoulders shaking, toward the door. "I had not heard—"

Like a bird she flew to his side, and her white sweet arms clenched around his neck, her lips were tilted up beneath

his own. "My dear, my dear . . . . my king . . . . do you think I could love other man than you? Charles, Charles, how little you guess the heart of a queen! Take me—take me—though every silly crowned zany in Christendom bleat his nay at our wedding! My lord of Suffolk, do you dare, here and now, with no moment's thought, to wed a queen?" She drew herself up proudly, and then crumpled at his knees, grinding her breasts against the sturdy pillars that upheld his great body.

"But when Henry hears . . . . Oh, Mary—"

She was up before him, her taut hands spreading his arms wide. "I'll force you, timorous knight, if you dare say me nay! I am a Tudor; and, when a Tudor loves . . . . Henry is no other. Why do you think he spends such long night hours at Jericho? Mistress Elizabeth Taillebois is no fairer than I. Whether he bedded with Sir Thomas Boleyn's wife, Elizabeth Howard, and had by her Mistress Anne Boleyn, I can not tell; my brother keeps silence, when he wills. I know that Anne's step-mother, a Norfolk woman of low birth, has been the king's bedmate; and Anne tells me that Henry has said certain words to Mary Boleyn, her sister. It may be no more than words, as yet; but Tudors are lustful folk, and I trust my brother to deal fairly with the lady. I love you, Charles . . . . Will you marry me, and straightway? If you breath an 'If' or a 'But,' I'll—"

"But yes, if you'll have me," and he closed her against his heart.

An hour later, they left the widowed young queen's apartment, and told their mind to Francis. They were secretly married in Paris. Word of this came to Henry, at the same time that he learned that another sister, Margaret, widow of James of Scotland, had thrown kingly counsels to the winds of heaven, and had wed with the earl of Angus,

head of the house of Douglas, and a member of the Scottish Council. A younger man than the queen, and his own heart bent toward Lady Janet Stuart; but ambition was strong, and he married the queen and the realm of Scotland. Indignant Scotland proscribed the husband as an outlaw, and seethed with the queen's impropriety, in putting her private will above the needs of the state.

England spoke the same tone. High courtiers caught the king's ear, seeking to find an echo of their grievance in his words. "A fine to-do, when royal widows, princesses of the blood royal, take their bodies into their own hands, and wed with no thought of treaty and alliance! If only your sister Mary—"

"Your pardon. What is marriage for?"

The courtiers gulped. "Marriage? For . . . . for children, perhaps, to inherit titles and lands . . . . For love and affection between the contracting parties—"

"Is this not a most egregious error?" queried the wide-eyed king. "From your first words, I thought that marriage was merely a means of adding an acre to an acre, a city to a province, an empire to a kingdom. Is it possible that marriage is for love between man and woman?"

"But in the case of kings and queens—"

"God blast a world, in which the cry of the bed is hushed by the snarling and bickering from an impertinent horde of senile old councillors! If I had the making of things, king and queen would mate as men and women mate, as birds mate, as beasts mate, for the urge of the mating, and not for the fool's gold of statecraft! I honor Mary, rutting little wench as she is, for taking the man of her heart. Bethink you, I myself sent Charles Brandon to her side, when the silly old Frenchman had coughed his last. Margaret is another kettle of fish; but, after all, she is herself, and a

Tudor, and a queen, and knows her own mind. We are not royal whores, we Tudors, to give our service for gold or gain in the greedy paws of pandering politicians! We mate for love, love for love, we live for love! Let that be remembered."

He swung heel upon them, and took horse for the little house at Jericho, where Mistress Elizabeth waited with hungry arms.

CHAPTER IX

The Butcher's Son

THIS much Henry said to his courtiers; for Wolsey had already been at his ear. But Mary and her husband found a scowl upon his face; and behind that scowl lurked a kingly shrewdness.

"So you have gone and bedded a Tudor, Charles! You did not marry your ward, with whom you were contracted—"

"Sire, she refused—"

Henry ignored the interruption. "You did not wed Margaret the princess. You did wed poor dead Anne Browne, and your cousin Margaret Mortimer, divorcing her on grounds of nearness of kinship. Divorce is growing as common as the sweating sickness; I have noted faint symptoms in myself . . . ."

The king did not smile, as he said this; the others, not sure which way the royal lion was about to jump, kept discreetly blank gazes upon him.

"There is the matter of gold plate and jewels, which England should own . . . ."

Brandon stared at the king, not bowing to his tradesman's mind. "Wolsey must have told you that we hold no quarrel there. A thousand pounds a year for twenty-four years we agree to pay your majesty; all of the dowry of two hundred thousand pounds that France bestowed upon his wife, Mary; all of the plate, all of the jewels, which came to her . . . ."

Henry's face did not change, but his heart smiled inwardly. This was what he waited to hear. "And all

conveyed secretly, in the court of Francis, with no word to me! I must confess, Charles, that my heart ached at word of what you had done; but Wolsey has spoken most graciously of you both, and—on one stipulation—I will say my Godspeed to you both."

"They've made a tradesman out of you, Harry, since I put foot on French shores. Come, name your terms; I have what I want; my lord of Suffolk may be as pleased: and, if the king will honor us by—"

"Damn you, this!" and a resounding royal slap on the back to each let out the energy writhing within, on learning that the dowry, the plate, the jewels were to be his at last. "You must be wedded again, on English soil, at Greenwich, with my blessing!"

Amid their smiles of delight, Henry queried shrewdly, "Your train came back with you?"

"All save Mistress Anne Boleyn, and that new maid, Mistress Jane Seymour, who joined me. Both stay to serve Queen Claude—"

"And King Francis," said Suffolk quietly.

"He has eyes for 'em, damn him, has he?"

"It is the French way, Harry."

"God's body, we're not eunuchs here in England either. Hmm. Maids of honor to Claude, eh? Well, joy to the Frenchman. You, Charles, shall keep close beside my person . . . ."

The hour came soon enough when the duke of Suffolk discreetly withdrew to his country estates, when Warham and Fox and Norfolk withdrew. There was not room in the palaces for more than the king and the butcher's son . . . .

Bishop of Tourney in France, bishop of Lincoln on his return, and now successively bishop of Bath, of Durham, of Worcester, doffing now that title, now this; but never omitting one tittle of the episcopal incomes . . . . abbot

of St. Albans, and the revenues of the bishoprics of Hereford and Winchester . . . . archbishop of York, a cardinal by the pope's word, priest of St. Cicely's beyond Tiber, papal legate in England . . . . These Wolsey was already, and ever grasping for more.

"Your grace has many bishoprics," an astute ambassador commented idly to the great churchman.

"One for each of my bastards; I must support them somehow," answered the butcher's son, more free-tongued than was his wont.

"Wholly qualifying you for the seat of St. Peter," flattered the other.

"That is as God wills, and my gold pays for," smiled back the Englishman.

Midway of February, in 1516, another child was born in England, which woke the people to a third, more tempered rejoicing. The queen, whose two infant princes had died, was brought to bed of a daughter, named Mary, after the king's royal sister. A daughter, when England must have a man's hand to rule it. Henry, disgruntled at the Spanish lady's ill-success regarding a male heir, left off his visits to Jericho long enough to get her with child again. Hardly eighteen months later, Catherine was again brought to bed of a child . . . . A third son, who died soon after birth.

The king came fuming up to the great cardinal. "Smother me in women tonight, Wolsey; the queen's brat has died, and I need a son to lord it after me."

The churchman smiled, and humored the king. Leaving word behind him, he was off for a day's hunt with the king. The cardinal, who was chancellor as well now, outshone the monarch in every way. Henry glittered in his royal tire; but Wolsey, in silk and satin, gold and gems, glittered more. Even his saddle was of silk and cloth of gold. Before

him on the hunt he had his cardinal's hat borne high in air, like a very idol of the paynims; and, when they paused at noon at the king's chapel, the hat must be reverently placed upon the altar of God Himself. His sergeant-at-arms and mace rode beside him, as well as two gentlemen carrying two pillars of silver, and the cross-bearer supporting the cross of York.

In the rest at noon, Wolsey spoke eloquently to the king of the great palace he was building at Hampton, where the very installation of pure water from the springs at Coombe Hill, by means of leaden pipes, would cost half a hundred thousand pounds.

"I should like to live in such a palace," said Henry wistfully.

"It is yours, sire," said the cardinal casually. "This more I have done for you. As part of the affiancement of your infant daughter, Mary, to the dauphin infant of France, you are to receive six hundred thousand crowns from Francis, and as dowry merely to return that Dead Sea fruit, the fortress of Tournay. You gain much, you lose nought."

"Ever-wise Master Wolsey! If you could get me a son as quickly . . . ."

"I have sons enough of my own, on the left side, sire. If I were a king, instead of a cardinal, and needed heirs, I would get them where I willed, and then shift them to the right, by a little word from Rome."

"Hmm . . . . I shall remember that word too. And Tournay goes to France, too, to end the last chance of ill-will in Europe, forever! The pope, with Selim the fiend battering from his Turkish stronghold, with Egypt and Syria overrun, against our very gates, has named a peace for five years, to be renewed forever, among all Christian kings and princes; the emperor, the pope, France, Spain,

and ourselves, are at last colleagued together forever, and war henceforth is impossible in Europe."

Wolsey bowed quietly.

"And this you have done, more than any man living."

Wolsey lifted his hands, deferentially putting away such unmerited honor.

"Oh, I see, and all see. Name your reward for this."

"What more does man need, than to shine high in your good grace, sire? One little matter lies still before me, which you may aid me toward. And that is . . . ." With a staff, with which he was idling, the chancellor sketched something upon the soil.

The king nodded. "The see of Rome. I guessed as much. Well, if word of mine can have it so, that too will be yours, O greatest subject that any king ever had, since the world woke at the shaping touch of God's fingers."

"And, if there is further delay in the receipt of my revenues from the ample bishoprics of Toledo and Palencia, in Spain, which Ferdinand granted me . . . ."

"I'll have the fleets of England around his ears in a fortnight. Have no fear there, Wolsey; we are one in that and all things."

The hunt was resumed; but after that Henry kept a closer eye on the ambitious cardinal. Word came to him of Wolsey's greatness. He was served by eight hundred gentlemen, earls, knights, and sons of noble families; on solemn fast days he uttered the mass, as if he were the pope's self already; bishops and abbots served him at these times, and dukes and earls handed to him the water and the towel with which he laved himself.

"He carries the largest cross in the world before him, by two tall vicars," sneered the banished Fox to the banished Warham. "But that will never atone for his sins, which are the largest in the world."

"And what are large and small? We were large once, Winchester," said the archbishop of Canterbury sorrowfully.

Matters went not too well at home. The Spanish queen, for all of her gentleness and queenliness, was never high in the hearts of her English subjects. The sight of black-garbed, starch-ruffed, stiff Spanish grandees, the Spanish hose and long rapiers of the bewhiskered matadors, the cowled heads and bare feet of the tonsured friars, the Romish pomp of the alien prelates, constantly irked the commoners of England. London woke to a bitter riot of apprentices, on the Ill May Day, against these foreign strutters. The uprising was put down; and, answering the gentle queen's plea, only the leader of the riot was put to death; but the irritation grew, and did not fail to reach the king's ear constantly.

In 1518 was the general pacification, at which no one lost but the dispossessed king of Navarre; and no one gained but the butcher's son of Ipswich. The next year saw the birth, at Jericho, of a son to the king, by his dear mistress Elizabeth Taillebois. The son was named Henry Fitzroy; he was soon named earl of Nottingham and duke of Richmond, and later admiral of England, warden of the Scottish marches, and lieutenant of Ireland. Well, Elizabeth had served her turn now; and the king turned in ardent pursuit of another inamorata. It was Mary Boleyn this time, with whose stepmother Henry was already grossly familiar. He had admired Mary for a long time; and he took her to his bosom at last, where she reigned wholly.

Maximilian, the emperor, died; Charles of Spain and Austria, and Francis of France, were at once in the field, with Henry belatedly following them. Europe was to be at peace forever . . . . and here already were her kings

bickering, with the ink hardly dried upon the treaty of eternal peace . . . .

Pace, Henry's envoy, relayed to the king that he had come too late; that the electors were already pledged to one or the other of the European monarchs. Very well, then, blustered Henry, throw your strength on the side of the Spaniard. Charles won the suffrage of the electors, by spilling a continent's ransom in gold among them.

"It might have been wiser, sire, to elevate the humble Francis, than the arrogant Charles," wondered a courtier aloud.

"To you, yes. In my eyes, Anjou, Normandy, and Guienne, our once English possessions, are still to be gained, by foxcraft, from the little Frenchman; who knows but that the very crown of France may yet rest on Tudor brows? And, to hide our minds, we have proposed meeting with the king's person in his realm, in an amicable encounter. Wolsey is seeing to the matter . . . ."

The great cardinal had been standing quietly beside the king, unwilling to lower himself by acknowledging the presence of the mere courtier. At his nose he held, and sniffed delicately, a fair orange, which had been plucked of its meat, and stuffed with a sponge impregnated with vinegar and sweet scents, against the pestilent air.

In a distant corner the poet laureate, Master John Skelton, was speaking aloud his latest satire, aimed at the great cardinal:

> He is set so high
> In his hierarchy
> Of frantic frenzy
> And foolish fantasy
> That in the Chamber of Stars
> All matters there he mars.
> Clapping his rod on the Board,
> No man dare speak a word.

"Bravo, Master Skelton!"

He is still at it:

> Some say "Yes," and some
> Sit still as they were dumb.
> Thus thwarting over them,
> He ruleth all the roost
> With bragging and with boast.
> Borne up on every side
> With pomp and with pride!

"True talk, if England ever hear it!"

A sager lord shook his head. "To me it spells the Tower, if word of it leak abroad."

"And the part about his eating? Let the duke, here, hear it again!"

Skelton smiled, and continued:

> To drink and for to eat
> Sweet hippocras and sweet meat,
> To keep his flesh chaste—

A burst of laughter. "He has as many byblows as pope Borgia!"

Skelton's hand was up, gently quieting the small tumult.

> In Lent for a repast
> He eateth capon's stew—

"But he's no capon, God's mercy! I know a maid, who told me how . . . ."

The poet's voice still:

> Pheasant and partridge mewed,
> Hens, chickens, and pigs,
> And . . . .

The king and Wolsey had withdrawn.

"What a youngling our Henry is! Nothing but girls, night after night; nothing but the chase, day after day."

"No man in England rides as well. He makes his horses fly, not leap; he springs from one to another in full course—"

"Eight or nine horses I have seen him wear down, in one course of the sun; then home to scrawl off a poem, or a counterblast against this perfidious anti-Christ, the monk of Eisleben and Wittenberg . . . ."

A master of bowmen shook his head. "He is a man. He draws a better bow than I—no man in England excels him."

"And—at wagers! He has lost four thousand pounds this twelve months gone! To me, more than a hundred—"

"Which proves you an ass of a courtier," said the bowman. "The shrewd courtier loses to his majesty."

A bepainted dandy smirked up. "Talking of Henry, of course, the dear thing. He plays the harpsicord, the organ, the lute, like a very girl; he sings like one of the morning stars—his own songs, too—" And in a mincing voice the dandy intoned.

As the holly groweth green,
And never changeth hue,
So I am—ever have been—
Unto my lady true!

"Yes," said the grizzled bowman. "I have heard he writ also, 'For whoso loveth, should love but one.' There must be no glass in his royal halls, or he could never say that of himself!"

The dandy simpered still. "He is the world's greatest architect, designing palaces as a pastycook designs venison stews! He speaks Spanish, Italian, French, Latin, as well as I speak my native tongue—"

The oldest courtier, who had served under Gloucester as well as the first Tudor, nodded a trembling head. "And this is the king who has raised a butcher's son to lord it over all of us! I have seen my lord Wolsey's train, his lowest

attendants tired in bodices of crimson velvet with gold chains, and in coats of scarlet bordered with black velvet. His stable is larger than the king's; his choir ampler than the king's; he has his high chamberlain, his vice-chamberlain, his dozen gentleman ushers, his eight waiters of his privy chamber, his ten lords in constant service, his forty gentlemen cupbearers, carvers, and servers, his six yeoman ushers, his eight grooms of the chamber, his forty-six yeomen of the chamber, his sixteen doctors and chaplains, his clerks, secretaries, learned counsellors, as well as ministers, armorers, sergeants-at-arms, heralds . . . . Would God my father had sold tainted meat as well as this lowborn 'other king's' father did!"

They stared at him, a trifle alarmed at his vehemence. "By the last galleys from Venice," the dandy chirped bravely, "came a hundred Damascene carpets for him, a gift he commanded! His poor constitution grants him a papal dispensation to munch capon and pheasant all Lent; how it must sorrow him, when he tumbles his doxy on the episcopal altar! I could slap his fat jaws, for that!" A treble squeak, at which all laughed.

"At Hampton Court, that he is building, he will have two hundred and eighty beds for strangers, made of red, green, and russet velvet," said the bowman absently. "My uncle has the order for filling. Kingly canopies over all; hundreds of counterpanes, of tawny damask, lined with blue buckram; of blue damask, with flowers of gold; of red satin, centered by a vast red rose; of blue sarcanet, with a tree and all manner of beasts in the center, wrought with the finest needlework. His plate is worth three hundred thousand golden ducats—"

"That is the gold plate alone; the silver is worth as much. And these all decorated with his cardinal's hat, and with images of Christ!"

"The butcher's son, a humble follower of a carpenter . . . . Yes, it is meet."

"And his women . . . ."

A sound of the trumpet. "List ye a proclamation from his most gracious Christian majesty, Defender of the Faith . . . ."

Slowly they gathered around the herald, all bickering and envying forgot in the thrill of something new toward. What was it to be—a tourney, a crusade, a war, a masquerade? If Henry willed it, whatever it be, it would be worth England's effort.

"The King commands . . . ."

CHAPTER X

The Field of the Cloth of Gold

ALL England throbbed with the news: England, in the person of Henry, was to meet France in person, on the marches of their dominions. The butcher's son aided and abetted the whole matter; it was he who named the English pale of Calais as the meeting-ground; it may have been he who named it the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

This is today; tomorrow the kings of the world meet at Calais; there is no day after. Off to the money-lenders, to mortgage the estate, to sell or pawn the ancestral plate, to sell to these filthy-fingered sons of gold the high and noble feudal rights, all to make a brave show before the twain kings and the fair ladies of the world. Let the lands go, if they are not entailed: let the backs of the wives go in rags, and the children suffer, so the chivalry of the world shine like newborn stars in the lustful eyes of Henry and Francis.

The silver tones of the heralds woke every court of Europe: the low countries, Germany, rich Burgundy, troubled Italy, Spain . . . . "In the month of June, fifteen hundred and twenty years after the birth of our Lord and Savior, the two kings, Henry and Francis, with fourteen aids, would engage, in a camp between Ardres and Guisnes, to answer all comers, that were gentlemen, at tilts, tourney, and barriers." Here is democracy for you . . . . All who are of noble birth—and if there are others in the world, butcher's sons or carpenters, there are ways of persuading the kings-at-arms—may meet the front knights of Europe sword to sword, and win undying name, for the sake of some fair light-o'-love . . . .

The queens would be present, their kingdoms on their backs; the chivalry of the assembled world were to be the champions and the spectators . . . .

One by one, by name, all the gentlemen of Europe were bid to the jousts. In England, and elsewhere, this summons was no less than a royal command. Buckingham, one of England's noblest, paled a little when his steward brought him the budget of what it would cost to appear bravely on this field. "Squeeze all my tenants, till the last pig and the last ear of wheat be gone," he ordered curtly. "I shall be no whit behind Harry on that day . . . . Though I take it ill that I must drain the merriment out of England, to burgeon on this alien field."

Word of this leaked to Wolsey, who was ever all ears; it was not forgotten, in a later twilight for the fortunes of the great duke.

One face looked askance at all this splendor: dour Charles, the Austrian-Spanish-Netherlander emperor. He sought with all of a weasel's guile to prevent the meeting. He whispered in Wolsey's ear, promising his weight to name the butcher's son the next pope, if only he would aid in this matter. He scattered the gold raped from a gentle race in Mexico broadcast throughout Europe, that somehow that which he could not prevent might yet redound to his might.

The meeting must be; but, in the meantime, Charles turned aside to visit the English cousin. Weasel-like he timed his visit, so that his armada dropped anchor at Hythe on the very day in which Henry entered Canterbury, in his progress to the coast. The venerable city opened its heart to magnificent gaieties, as the emperor knelt before his aunt, Catherine of Aragon and England, and before the king's sister, the lustful duchess of Suffolk, whom he had once almost bedded in lawful wedlock. He mused on his sickly French queen, and turned sick at heart, so that he

could not stir his legs on the dance. This was the beauty he should have had at his side . . . .

With Mary his wife, and the English cardinal the pope, and Henry wed to his aunt, the world would have belonged to him. Leo the Tenth was pope, the de Medicis, who denied the immortality of the soul . . . . so the mad monk of Wittenberg reported; who had slept with a mistress of the French king, Marie Gaudin, by agreement with Francis, and had given to the rutting trull the great Gaudin diamond, safe in the family vaults at Sourdis; who had revived the ancient papal tax on crimes, from the days of John the Twenty-second . . . . Cynically Charles thought over the schedule of papal bargains: a price stated for an ecclesiastic committing fornication with nuns, cousins, nieces, god-daughters, or any woman . . . . a slight sum over for adding to these bestiality, or the sin of the flesh between men and men . . . . a price stated, and a low price, for a priest who deflowered a virgin . . . . for a nun, who abandoned herself to several men, simultaneously or in succession, permitting her notwithstanding to become an abbess . . . . fornication by laymen, adultery by wives or husbands, rapine, simple murder, of one or more persons on the same day, the rate being the same . . . . wife-murder, child-murder, abortion, parent-murder, brother or sister murder, murder by a bishop or an abbot through an ambuscade, remittance of all debts, violations of Lenten regulations, legitimatization of bastards, entrance of eunuchs into sacred orders, oath-breaking, absolution in advance for any murders committed, all compounded for a few filthy pence paid to the Holy Father. He recalled the indignation of the pious Conrad, abbot of Usperg, against all this, less than a hundred years before: "O Vatican . . . . urge on to debauchery, excite to rape, incest, even parricide; for the greater the crime, the more gold will it bring thee . . . . Now

thou reignest through depravity of morals; . . . . thou wilt open the kingdom of heaven to debauchees, sodomites, assassins, parricides. What do I say? Thou wilt sell God himself for gold."

Charles's lips curled wrily. Not too admirable a spectacle, this Leo, who had revived the ancient sale of pardons. And now the sale of indulgences, such as Arcembold was selling in Saxony, with full papal permission: "As our Lord Jesus Christ absolves you by the merits of his passion, I, by his authority, and that of the blessed apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and that of our most holy father, absolve you from all ecclesiastical censures . . . . from all sins, delinquencies or excesses which you may have committed, or shall commit hereafter, how great soever they may be . . . ." John Tetzel, another purveyor of the papal bulls, also in Saxony, listed in obscene circulars the variations of lustful crimes that a little gold could permit, in essence urging all to fall to these pleasant vices. He would sell a Christian the right to remit the sins of ten persons of his selection, ninety-nine times a year . . . . the right to deliver from purgatory as many souls as entered or came from a church between sunup of August first and sunup of August second of each year . . . . He would remit eighty thousand years of Purgatory for a small sum, for visiting a church sacred to St. Sebastian; and four thousand years, for those who went to certain churches dedicated to the Virgin . . . . He would sell the presence of the Virgin Mother, who would come in person to warn the purchaser of the day and hour of his death . . . . He would sell banditti the right to continue their rapine, by dividing equably with the Holy Father . . . . And he, and the other Dominicans, passed their days gaily at dice or cards, their nights swilling wine and bussing doxies at the public taverns.

The emperor shook his head. Bad as these were, they

were nought of a trouble to him, compared to the mad monk, Martin Luther, born seven years before the English Henry. The poor fool, when his friend walking beside him was slain by lightning, saw in this God's command for him to turn to holy orders. He came rioting over revealed religion, saying that God bade him tell men to drive a poignard into the breast of the Holy Father, and to treat all the churchmen as brigands; to cast them all into Tiber flood, to cure them of their ravaging diseases, sprung of carnal living. Others preached beside him, the Cordolier Thomas, and Oliver Maillard: "How long shall we be scandalized by your adulteries and your incests, you unworthy priests? When will you cease to steal money from the poor, in order to bed a concubine beside you? . . . . Curses upon you, ministers of Satan, who seduce young girls and married females, and learn from them at confession the means of drawing them into sin; who . . . . initiate the young into foul pleasures, who . . . . rear young boys and girls for lust and infamy!" Maillard was more vehement: "I know a bishop who is every night served at supper by young girls entirely naked; I know another who keeps a seraglio of young girls, whom he calls prostitutes in moulting . . . . Bishops no longer give away livings, but at the request of females, ... when the mother, sisters, nieces, or cousins of the candidate have paid the price of them with their honor . . . . Your nieces, more frequently your bastards, who are your concubines . . . . Come forward, nuns who people the cisterns and ponds of the convents with the dead bodies of newborn children."

"And yet," Charles opened his heart to Henry, "this Leo the Tenth is a man. The chase is his chief exercise; his nights are passed in gorgeous festivals. One of his cooks has invented that most delicious of all dishes, sausages stuffed with slices of peacock. Surely a man who can aid in

designing such a masterpiece must be in high favor with God!"

"I have heard," Henry admitted, "that his festivals are noteworthy."

"That I know. He is served by the handsomest girls and youths in the world, tired in Oriental costumes, who caress his guests in all the ways you and I would have, Henry. Not perhaps quite on the level with the Borgia feasts; but still worth one's time. And he grows old, and your Master Wolsey . . . ."

The two of them were at one, on the surface, in this matter. The four days' visit came to an end. On the 29th of May, 1520, the emperor took ship for his native Flanders, while the king passed on to Dover, and, by the month's last day, to Calais. By the fourth of June the king, the two queens of England, and the dowager of France, now duchess of Suffolk, took up their abode in a splendid palace built almost overnight in England, and sent abroad for erection: a palace three hundred and twenty feet square, with tapestries of arras, hangings of silk and satin, and all the luxurious decorations that man could devise. The palace dazzled with gold and glass; before it two fountains played, one of wine, the other of hippocras. The king of France lodged more humbly in tents, made entirely of cloth of gold, surmounted by devices of solid gold.

Wolsey secretly visited Francis for two days, and drew up an agreement of eternal amity. Never again were England and France to fall to blows with one another . . . .

An additional dowry was granted by Francis, should the marriage between the dauphin and Mary, the infanta of England, be consummated. The four monarchs swore to this on the holy evangelists, and took together the Lord's eucharist in common. The agreement was to last forever; it was not broken for two years and thirteen days.

Dawn of the next day . . . . The culverin sounded its tocsin . . . . From Guisnes and Ardres the two processions set forth, and met within the valley of Andern, where a splendid pavilion of cloth of gold had been reared aloft for their royal reception. The courts dazzled: embroideries of gold, inset with precious stones; velvets of Genoa; tissues of silver and gold interwoven with all glorious rainbow hues.

The kings dismounted, embraced, walked arm-in-arm into the magnificent pavilion, professing warm regard for each other. To effectuate this regard, the attendants were carefully told off on each side, the kings left their residences at the same moment, and visited their respective queens at precisely the same moment. For fourteen days the rout lasted . . . . banqueting, revelry by night, dancing, by day the superb tournaments, the shivering of stout ashen lances with heads of the best Bordeaux steel, and tumbling of gallant knights into the dust, before the smiles of queens and princesses and all the constellations of feminine beauty, with the trumpets neighing above even the eternal cry of the heralds, "Fight on, brave cavaliers! Man dies, but glory lives forever!"

Each day the kings appeared in new and richer robes; each day they excelled all, save each other. Each day both monarchs ran five courses with grinded spears, or fought at barriers with sharpened swords; each day each bore down his five antagonists. Henry was a giant in manhood, hardly shorter than his gigantic grandfather, fourth Edward, of the iron blood of the Plantagenets, and the fiery ichor of the Tudors; and Francis was no whit behind him in manly strength.

Blast this silly envy and suspicion! One morning Francis took horse with a small train of gentlemen, before dawn, and rode into Henry's camp at Guisnes.

"You're prisoners—you and all of your men!" he shouted aloud, in high good humor.

Henry rushed forth, took the monarch in arms, protested that he surrendered at discretion.

Out came the French jewels, a present to the Englishman; in return, the gems of England were poured into the French lap.

The next day, over rode Henry to the French camp, similarly unaccompanied, and here he seized Francis in a bear-hug, and threw him, by a wrestler's hold, to the ground. "You're vanquished," he cried exultantly.

So it was that these kings debated matters of state.

But the knights of the emperor were prominent by their absence, one and all. And, with farewells spoken, Henry set out to Gravelines on the Waal, leaving his queen behind, to repay his nephew for the honor of the visit to England; and conducted the emperor back to Calais, and to his aunt the English queen. Three days this visit lasted. During it, certain French envoys entered, and read aloud before Charles the treaty made between Francis and Henry, demanding the emperor's signature. This he avoided giving; named his uncle flatteringly the arbiter of any disputes between the empire and France; and rode off to his own castle.

At this meeting, serving Queen Claude, Mistress Anne Boleyn was present, tingling from attentions from Francis; and also Mistress Jane Seymour, another English beauty.

Peace in Europe . . . . In October of the same year, the mad monk appeared before the Diet at Worms, still in his friar's habit; and, refusing to retract or recant, was proscribed by edict. Henry, who had first been schooled for the church, saw here his chance to advance the cause of Wolsey, and his own emphasis in churchly matters. He published an answer to Luther, called "On The Seven Sacraments," written by his own royal hand. The delighted pope let the

dean of Windsor, who bore a copy of the book to him, as a sign of his high pleasure first kiss his foot, and then his cheeks; and conferred on Henry the title, "Defender of the Faith."

Luther read the book. "The English king writes in elegant language," he snapped forth. "Outside of this, and in all other respects, he is a fool and an ass, a blasphemer and a liar."

For this Luther later apologized in print . . . .

And there were always awaiting Henry, as consolation, the soft arms of Mary Boleyn, and the embraces of the women of the court.

And France threatened trouble again.

CHAPTER XI

Blood Will Have Blood

THOMAS WOLSEY, who was, in his own person, so many bishops that one court wit called him an ecclesiastical council,—and lost his living for the jest—sat frowning in the king's halls. "It is not England that groans, Harry, save by the crying on of one only man!"

Henry shook his head. "It is troublesome blood, this Stafford blood."

"Look you, Harry. Humphrey the first duke died at Northampton for Lancaster; Humphrey his son died at St. Albans, for the same red cause; Henry, the second duke, who took over his grandsire's title, from the blood royal on both sides, wed to Catherine Woodville, the queen's sister, conspired against the Yorkist Edward IV, conspired later against Richard of Gloucester, joined with your father's Tudor cause, and lost his head for it, eight years before you saw the light of England's day. Now his son Edward, your lord high constable, a Plantagenet, Harry, and your troublesome cousin, is the man who has set England groaning against your deeds and my words. You have squeezed the merriment out of England, this feeble cock crows, to waste it in France."

"I cannot believe—"

"He comes now, Harry. Warwick, Suffolk . . . . so it has been with the other Lancastrians. Note his bearing; probe his loyalty, tent his surliness . . . ."

In came the nobles for their daily service to the king. With all courtly ceremonies the duke of Buckingham,

sprung of the Stafford blood, brought forward the fine basin of gold, for the king to lave himself.

Wolsey, a stony smile on his face, reached over and stuck his hands in the scented water.

Blood rose like sunrise in the duke's face—royal blood, Plantagenet blood. "Your grace needs water," he sneered. With this, he flung the whole basin-full against Wolsey's body, drenching his legs and soaking his shoes.

Wolsey's face was still stony. "I'll sit on your skirts for that, my lord of Buckingham."

Edward Stafford threw back his head to laugh unroariously; and, midway of the laugh, his anger choked him. He reined in his pounding heart. "I shall wear only a jerkin to court hereafter, your grace. If I have no skirts, even a miracle-monger could not sit upon them."

Wolsey negligently stood, the water pooling around his feet, and staining with a dark stain the tawny carpet, until it glowed like a pool of blood. He spoke without lifted tone. "That mad monk of Henton, Hopkins of Somersetshire—what said he, Buckingham, before our Harry set sail for France?"

"You've bid me tell that till it is a fishwife's tale, your grace. But I will humor doddering queries. Great honor should come to the king from the venture, he said. More than that—to prevent your grace, who is about to ask me further—he told me that, if James of Scotland came to England, he would come to stay—as he has stayed."

"Even so," and the churchly chancellor toyed with a great jewel pending from a gilt chain around his neck, a jewel sent by Selim's self. "You have visited this mad monk since, Buckingham."

The duke stood more stiffly now. Would this damned butcher's son know a man's secretest doings? "I may have seen him once or twice. He said nothing of note."

Wolsey held out the jewel, till its ruby glint echoed the blood in the pool of carpet at his feet. "Nothing of a trodden skirt, and a lonely poll, lopped away from its body? Bethink you, Buckingham; of these things, or of a grizzled poll with a third bright hue added, in the form of a coronet, to the black and white the head itself bore?"

"I have no time for tradesmen's sons," muttered the duke, swinging on his heel.

Sir George Nevil, lord of Abergavenny, came forward at the cardinal's nod. "He has gone away, in a pet," said Wolsey suavely. "Speak to our royal master what the Stafford said to you."

"If this were not treason, sire, I could not let it leak. But it passes courtly talk. My lord of Buckingham told me that, if your highness died, he would have the whole rule of the realm of England, in spite of God himself, if he dared say the contrary."

"So? He said that?" The king's eyes tented the very soul of the lordling.

"And one thing more: that, if I dared breathe word of this, he would fight me to my death, to cram the truth down my throat as if it had been a very lie."

"It will be neither, Sir George. For, if perchance the tree of Stafford fall before the tree of Tudor, he will neither have the realm nor lack the realm; but he will have his own small realm, of wormy dust, and no more. I thank you; and this shall not be forgotten."

Before the sun had slept again, Edward Stafford, duke of Buckingham, earl of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton, was in the Tower. A noble court was assembled, to try the prisoner. The duke of Norfolk presided; his son, the earl of Surrey, was wedded to Buckingham's daughter; and, with Norfolk as lord steward, justice to the royal prisoner was sure. He himself was allowed to face his ac-

cusers: and what they said was withering. Repeatedly he had sworn that he would follow Henry on the throne, if the king died without issue; the French journey was death to England; the king should not prosper, nor his heirs, but the duke would reign next over England.

"Treason manifest!" cried out Henry the king.

The cardinal looked stony, and beneath it something sang in his blood.

"Take care you spill no spleen against a noble man," a courtier, still friendly to Stafford, warned the witness. "You were our king's surveyor, and were let go, on whimperings from the tenants you had outraged with your exactions."

"Peace, peace," commanded Henry. "Was there more of this?"

"Ay, sire. When your majesty ailed, this lord of Stafford said that, if you died then, off would come Wolsey's head, and Sir Thomas Lovell's head, that no bar stand between the Stafford and the round of sovereignty."

"This is enough!"

The surveyor raised a trembling hand. "More than this he said. If your highness, he said, had sent him to Tower after you had scolded him about Sir William Blomer, he would have played what his father designed against Gloucester: wearing a mastle of seeming penitence, he would have driven the knife into your royal person!"

There were other witnesses; there was Edward of Buckingham, let speak in his own behalf. The court pronounced its doom, Norfolk's face beset with tears at what he was called upon to do. It must be the death . . . .

This was in May of 1521; and blue-eyed Mary Boleyn, stately and golden-haired, was known throughout England to be reigning in the king's heart, instead of the aging Spanish queen. Sir Thomas Boleyn, father of the regnant mistress, knew of the matter, from hearsay and from Mary's

delighted accounts; and served his king all the more faithfully, for this honor paid to the blood of the Boleyns.

Peace forever in Europe . . . . And Francis of France already with his armies on the march across the Pyrenees, seizing the moment of a revolt in Spain to assault the emperor's domains there. Within half a month, the French had cleared the last Spaniard out of the marchlands; and only when he drove on to Logroño, in Castile, did the Spanish insurgents rally to the emperor's banner, and lash the French back out of Navarre. At the same time, the duke of Bouillon was incited by Francis to plunge into the Netherlands. His assault failed, he was driven back, and his own lands were devastated by forty thousand Germans and Switzers, in the pay of Charles.

At the striking of the first blow, both emperor and king appealed to Henry, as the named arbiter in their disputes. Francis trumped up a pretext that, by an old treaty, Charles was bound to evacuate Navarre; the emperor claiming, more truly, that in times of peace Francis had entered his lands, and demanding, as the treaty provided, that Henry should intervene by arms.

Which was just what Henry and Charles had been quietly colleaguing for.

But Henry was not ready yet to strike. He ordered the rivals to send commissioners before him, to lay bare their grievances; and promised a just arbitrament.

The emperor accepted at once; the king, even though the fortunes of war were all against him, gave his assent, only in case his chancellor agreed to the terms of the award. Enough . . . . Wolsey was named arbiter, and was sent to Calais with an emperor's train behind him. Out of the confessed impotency of the commissioners, Wolsey went, with the king's urgent consent, to visit the emperor, who

was lying in state at Bruges, to endeavor to oil the troubled waves.

Four hundred horses escorted the cardinal toward Bruges. A mile without the gate, the emperor greeted Wolsey in person, and squired him inside the city. For thirteen full days they feasted together, with the mornings devoted to solemn conclaves upon the warlike matters pending. And still the war went against the French: Amand and Mortaigne in Picardy fell to the imperial arms, Ardres surrendered to the Burgundians, Mouzon and Mezieres yielded to the Nassau ally of Charles. A settlement was arrived at, and the formal terms were carried to the emperor by Sir Thomas Boleyn and another. Sir Thomas happy that, while he served Henry abroad, Henry did as well for his daughter, Mary, at home; while Worcester and the Bishop of Ely carried the terms of composition to Francis. A final snag in the proceedings . . . . and Wolsey gave his final word, that Henry must intervene in person against France, the treaty-breaker.

And then, like a thunderclap, the French Swiss troops in Milan revolted; Milan, Parma, Pavia, Cremona were taken; and Milan was swept clear of the French . . . .Victory for the imperial arms! The Sforza were to be restored to Milan; and the news so overjoyed Leo the Tenth, that, his chroniclers at once told the world, the blood flowed back on his heart, and suffocated him. There were others who whispered of poison; but an excess of joy, to the over old, is poison enough. He died so suddenly that the viaticum, the eucharist given at point of death, could not be administered. Gone was the lecherous old de Medicis; the heart of Wolsey bounded upward, and the smile of Charles the emperor grew grimmer yet.

Six years before Henry was born, a rude hand-gun, so clumsy as to need four hands to work it, had been used at

Bosworth field; at Pavia, the musketry of the Spanish foot was so rapid that it shattered the gendarmerie of France . . . . "But these things," his courtiers assured Henry, "are nothing against your royal majesty and his armed knights. They are of no more worth than this childish invention of printing, which can never replace clerkly manuscripts; or this foul anti-Christ movement of Luther's, which can never make a dent in papal supremacy; or this silly modern learning, which after all is far inferior to the writings of Chrysostom and Augustine; or this distant desert of the Americas, which promised so much and yields so little to man. No, things are too perfect to be improved by man's fumblings . . . ."

And Wolsey sent word to the emperor: "It is the time, as you have agreed. Make me pope now, and the world will be ours together."

And Charles reflected . . . . The man is a fool, who elevates to high office any but the pliable, the malleable, the damp clay, the workable putty. Seats like Peter's are not for God-gifted giants. . . .

He sent to Wolsey his ardent professions of assistance; wrote high letters commending him, and calling on all to support him as the emperor's favorite; and delayed these letters, so that they must arrive too late to alter Italian intrigue.

The vacancy in the Holy See was prolonged, by the plottings of the ambitious cardinals. Cardinal Giulio de Medicis had enough votes to thwart the designs of any competitor; but not enough to have himself named. The Cardinals Wolsey, Cortona, Ferrier, Cibo, Colonna, and Farnese strove together . . . . Promises scattered on every hand, gold filtering into the coffers of the greedy princes of the church . . . . And no man gave more liberally of both than the butcher's son of Ipswich. There was no man so great as he

living in this world: Charles and Henry were dim, in his presence; he earned the suffrage to the seat of God himself, if only that were vacant; Charles had promised all support, Henry was yielding it gladly . . . . It could not be but that England would sit in the Vatican now in the end!

Eight times the bartered ballots were counted . . . . On the ninth scrutiny, a compromise candidate was put forward by the de Medicis party, the cardinal Adrian, Florent d'Estrusen, bishop of Tortosa, the old tutor of the emperor . . . .

Italy writhed at the news. What, another barbarian, instead of a cultured Italian, in the sacred chair? A mere son of a ship-carpenter of Utrecht . . . . "No, a weaver's son." "By your leave, you lie; the son of a brewer!" "—Of an upholsterer!" "A reformer!"

This last he was; so much so, that the mistress of a canon once sought to poison him, for his efforts to end lecherous living.

Italy was outraged; but Wolsey saw now that his whole structure was about to crumble upon his head. He had grown too tall for England to stomach. With his boundless ambition removed to Rome, with Charles lording Europe and Henry secure in England and France, the world would be safe for God for another thousand years. It had fallen out differently; anti-Christ was in the saddle; perhaps the mad monk of Eisleben would be pope after Adrian . . . .

After all, the man was a dotard; he could not live long; Charles had sworn his word, and at worst it would be merely a retarding of English hopes. So Wolsey bided his time, not seeing that the setting sun will set, for all man's machinations . . . .

Charles landed at Dover in person, and consummated arrangements for his marriage with the little Princess Mary, his own cousin. Francis shrewdly woke Ireland and Scotland

to war against their English neighbors. Henry, his resources gone at last, for the first time in eight years summoned his Parliament to grant him more monies. Wolsey named Sir Thomas More speaker. Wolsey demanded eight hundred thousand pounds; the Commons excluded him from their deliberations, and answered that he must reduce this sum. He refused; so they reduced it for him; spreading their grant over four years, and exempting the northern counties and the cinque ports from any exaction. Albany, the Scottish regent, fled from the son of the victor of Flodden, affrighted by his very name; and Scotland was at peace for eighteen years thereafter with her southern neighbor.

Meanwhile Adrian the pope, hated by all the loose-living Italian clergy, was ringed by murder plots. A priest of Placenza, named Marius, was arrested at the moment he was drawing his dagger from his robe, to strike the prelate dead. The ceiling of the holy chapel, dislodged to kill the pope, killed instead only the six or seven Swiss who preceded the Holy Father. The satirists grew gay at his expense: the pope was a miser, limiting himself to a ship-carpenter's living, swilling beer instead of wine, munching haddock as the cheapest of all fishes, turning in his dotage to magic exclusively, seeking the philosopher's stone, to satisfy his miser's craving . . . .

The pope himself indicted his clergy: "It would be difficult to find a single priest who is exempt from simony, robbery, adultery, and sodomy." On the 14th of September, 1523, the pope died; in the night, garlands and crowns were hung from the door of his physician's house, with these words: "To the liberator of his country."

Wolsey's last chance . . . . Henry besought the emperor, over his own seal, to aid the cardinal; Wolsey himself urged the emperor to advance his Italian army toward Rome, to add the threat of arms to the persuasiveness of

promises and gold. This Charles would not do, for his mind was his own . . . . The French cardinals were immovable; Wolsey was their land's greatest enemy, and they would not see him living lifted above them. Between Wolsey, Giulio de Medici and the cardinal Pompeo Colonna, the choice lay. The de Medici bought off his Italian rival with the title of vice chancellor of the church and with the gift of his own palace, one of the most magnificent in Rome. And so this posthumous bastard of a Florentine duke by young Floretta Grini became Clement the Seventh, and Wolsey went back to his English sunset.

CHAPTER XII

Bluff King Hal

WOLSEY came back, to find a restive and more demanding master than he had left. Henry was popular; Wolsey was not: and, since they were equally gifted, equally ambitious, and equally lustful, this proved, to the wise men, that Henry was the shrewder of the two. Wolsey kinged it in aloof pride, too high, God's mercy, for duke or earl to touch him; Henry slapped his courtiers on the back, and tumbled wenches into bed, with as little ceremony as a bluff sea captain, starved from sight of men and touch of women for a twelve-months. Bluff King Hal . . . . His face, his name even, woke a roar of approval from Lizard Point to Tweedmouth. And, under it all, a rat's guile, a goat's will, a giant's might.

Sebastiano Giustiniani, the Venetian, wrote back a full picture of the monarch at this time. "His majesty is as handsome as nature could form him, above any other Christian prince; handsomer by far than the king of France. He is exceedingly fair, and as well proportioned as possible. When he learned that the king of France wore a beard, he allowed his also to grow; which, being somewhat red, has the appearance of gold." For this, the whole court grew gold hair and gold beards; a little golden powder doing the trick, when nature slacked. It is so, the wise men of the time pointed out, that men's fashions are born and breed: if a king have a wen on his brow, or a snaggle tooth, a whole court, and after it a whole world, grow tumerous foreheads, and cherish snag-teeth.

Giustiniani extolled on: musician, composer, wrestler,

ANNE BOLEYN

About 1532

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery, London

linguist, pious and godly, a resplendent hunter, champion at bowling, gamer who drops his thousands of ducats a day, and beloved of all. Bluff King Hal . . . . The Spanish queen was beauteous, too, but wilted . . . . withered . . . . petals browning and dropping . . . . Not a woman for his majesty. English women of delicate birth and high rank went abroad a-horse with their lords, following hawk and hound, cheering on the ripping death, the hot blood-letting. Not these for Catherine:

> With stole and with needle she was not to seek,
> And other practicings for ladies meet,
> For pastimes—as tables, tric-trac, and gleek,
> Cards and dice.

Chess, backgammon, whist, cards, and dice . . . . Even these, Erasmus wrote the king, his saintly wife avoided for reading of pious authors. Two hours a day at least she allotted to having devotional writings read to her. Henry spent these two hours, and more, elsewhere.

She had taxed Mary Boleyn with her rôle as royal mistress: Mary had confessed her guilt tauntingly, as the chroniclers attest. In her closet she said some words to the king; and he—most because his body had tired of the exquisite beauty, and sought fresher fare—had agreed to find her a husband, and put her by. This enraged Sir Thomas Boleyn, the girl's father . . . . What, his daughter pass out of the royal favor, discarded into the merely virtuous arms of some knightling of a husband? He renounced his daughter, when she persisted in marrying this William Carey, a penniless younger brother, a near kinsman of the king, by descent from the Beauforts. This was at the end of January, 1521.

The queen's days grew fairer. Buckingham was gone, done to death by Wolsey; but Wolsey was falling out of honor, to her delight. When Charles the emperor had visited the land, the year after Mary Boleyn was put by, he had

angered the cardinal excessively by commenting on the death of Buckingham, "Then has the butcher's dog pulled down the fairest Buck in Christendom" . . . . Let Wolsey fume; it was not healthy for subject to froth at word of king or emperor. War with France, and Catherine meekly accepted among her maids a chit just returned from France, one Mistress Anne Boleyn, Mary Boleyn's sister. It was easy, Catherine adjudged, for her to keep such froward mistresses in their place. She had been maid of honor, this Anne Boleyn, to two French queens, to the duchess of Alençon; she had shared the illicit caresses of at least one king with the notorious countess Chateaubriant and the duchess d'Estampes, who had natheless been greeted as princesses in high esteem by the blood royal of France.

Catherine was the more at ease, because Mistress Anne came back to wed a kinsman, Sir Piers Butler, Piers the Red in common greeting, to end a family bickering over certain estates. She was just past twenty—Catherine was almost a score of years older; and by sweet fortune Henry saw her walking in her father's garden at Hever, engaged her in converse, and found her as witty as she was lovely.

Back to Westminster, where he opened his heart to Wolsey. "She has the wit of an angel; she is worthy of the crown," he tested out.

"You had her mother, the talk goes; the chit may be your own daughter, if rumor reports truth. You have good precedent . . . . The Holy Father, Alexander the Sixth, knew Lucrezia his daughter . . . . and other goodly examples. If your majesty find her worthy of love, she should be as amiable as you have found her step-mother, and her sister."

Henry shook his head. "I fear she will never consent, *that* way."

The butcher's son lifted an oracular head. "Great princes, if they choose to play the lover, can melt steel."

Sir Thomas Wyatt, the courtly poet and wit, was one who raved over Anne's fresh young beauty. He had known her from childhood; and now, married as he was, he sought to know her more intimately. He spread to the world his vision of her beauty. "She's a noble imp, Harry," he rallied the king. "Darkly beautiful; an angel for voice . . . . Her very little sixth finger is an added grace of God to her exquisite person."

Henry nodded. "It is for that she brings in this pagan fashion of hanging sleeves, which every maid in the court has aped her in. There are those that say her slender beauty is too sallow of face; that quarrel at her buck tooth, which I have ever found a sign of liveliness in love; that drone of her dainty asthma; that even reproach the strawberry mole on her throat, which God knows she covers neatly with a neckband, which again the maids all ape, as if there were a plague of mighty moles afflicting all the maids of honor."

"She is never sickly, sire; she, her maid, and her spaniel, devastate the morning's allowance at court of a chine of beef, a manchet, and a large loaf, washed down with a gallon of brown October ale . . . . With hens, pigeons, and rabbits added; and, on fast days, a table groaning with salt salmon, salted eels, gurnet, whitings, plaice, and flounders. Mary is the fairer, I hold . . . ." hopeful that the king would express a preference for the older daughter.

"Anne's very blemishes make her strive the more to outshine every woman in Christendom."

And then Wyatt brought out what was on his heart: this rumor that Anne had hurled herself impetuously into a projected marriage with Henry Lord Percy, Northumberland's eldest son. Henry listened to it all with a mask of smiling unconcern; his counsels were his own.

And then he sought out Wolsey, and stormed for a full hour. "Adulterous little brat! Oh, I have full word of what she did in France; and what with Wyatt and others here. By God, I've a mind to send Percy to the Tower! She is marked for my quarry."

"No, no, sire, it is easier than that. Leave me the management of the whole matter. She is contracted to Sir Piers Butler, recall; with that as a whip . . . ."

So the cardinal summoned the young lord, and rated him roundly for his silliness . . . . He, heir to one of the noblest earldoms in the kingdom, matched with a maid as low as Anne Boleyn. Why, Northumberland would disinherit the son forever for this fault!

Poor Percy wept . . . . The girl, after all, had blood of Ormond and Norfolk in her veins . . . . Yet he would marry her—

Wolsey turned bleak. It was forbidden. Unless Percy chose to be contumacious . . . .

Percy threw himself on the will of the king and the cardinal. Northumberland was summoned out of the North. Whipping up his will with a great cup of the cardinal's wine, he seated himself on the serving-men's bench in the cardinal's palace, and summoned his son to stand, cap in hand, before him. His words withered the impetuous young lover; the match was ended, and Percy was banished from the court, and affianced to Shrewsbury's daughter, Mary Talbot, whom he wed, to his great unhappiness, before 1523 ended.

Anne was discharged from the queen's service, for this shrewd fault, and dismissed to her father's house. In her wild anger at my lord the cardinal, she tore her neckband from her throat, to save herself from choking, and raged up and down her locked apartment. No one but that Wolsey

had planned this end of her noble hoping . . . . She would make him fry for it yet!

When she had had time to recover from her pet, Henry himself paid a visit of state to Hever . . . . Sir Thomas Boleyn was not too happy that one daughter had declined from the high post of royal mistress to the mere wife of an impecunious gentleman; he had small desire to have another daughter pass into such brief royal favor. Anne, for her part, was still furious at the cardinal's intervention. She took to her chamber, on a plea of indisposition, when Henry arrived at the castle, and did not quit it until the king had departed.

In every way Wolsey strove to regain the full favor of Henry; but the tall king saw that the cardinal had grown too tall for England. Pity that Rome did not welcome him! His very pride, engendered of his butchering beginnings, made him disliked on every hand. Wolsey set the most elaborate table for his majesty's amusement, employing the world's greatest cooks to build him dishes in the likeness of castles; of Paul's church and steeple, proportioned as perfectly as a painter could have done. There were beasts, birds, fowls of divers kinds, lively personages, counterfeited in dishes; some contending with swords, some with guns and crossbows; some vaulting and leaping, dancing with fair ladies, jousting with spears, and in even more ribald poses. And women he provided for the king, out of his own ample store . . . . Henry accepted it all, and kept his own counsels.

He still sought to be hailed king of France. To this end, he engaged the great Constable Bourbon, weaning him from his royal master Francis. Bourbon's men mutinied, after Marseilles was taken; and Francis, in his mad impetuosity, struck back at Milan. Like a fiend he fought, striking down seven men with his own hand, before he was forced to sur-

render to the Spanish troops of the emperor. Henry sought vainly to control the negotiations that followed; and discovered that Charles was about to break off his affiancement to the English princess Mary, and to marry Donna Isabella of Portugal.

Bluff King Hal smiled grimly over this; and, when Charles offered at once to marry Mary—intending what he and his God alone knew—Henry offered to surrender her to the emperor, in return for the person of the captured king of France. Charles foisted a scruple, that Mary had been offered in marriage to Scotland and France, while contracted to him. Henry refused to let her go, Francis not being surrendered to him, and freed Charles from his obligation. Within a few weeks, the emperor wed Matilda, the infanta of Portugal. Francis was released, on making solemn promises; which he broke, every one of them, as soon as he was freed.

Clement the pope had sided with France; and it was on Rome that the wrath of the empire fell. The German mercenaries and free companions, led by Bourbon, stormed and took the holy city, Bourbon falling by a musket bullet midway of the attack. The Prince of Orange, second in command, concealed the death of the leader, and turned the city over to the untender ravages of his soldiery. Spanish Catholics and German Lutherans alike exulted in the gore of God's city. The palaces of the cardinals and the ambassadors, the churches and monasteries, the houses of rich citizens and humble artisans, were alike pillaged. Shrieking nuns were torn from their hiding places, dragged naked to the public square, and ravished with roars of delight, in the emperor's name. Young girls were violated on the very altars; young boys served their bloody turn as well; men were hung by their feet, with lighted braziers beneath their heads, and slowly burned; they were lashed with leaden

thongs, had ears, nose, eyes torn from them; there were even more amusingly dreadful pastimes. The tombs of the popes were torn open, and the dead bodies cast out on the flag-stones. The shrines of the saints were raped, and the skulls of St. Peter and St. Paul used by the lowest soldiers in whatever way their inflamed fancies could dictate. The sacred gold vessels in the churches became the objects of ribald use. The wild Lutherans named themselves a drunken pope, and led him, tiaraed, through the streets, roaring out bacchanalian songs in his honor. Europe was at peace forever, by sacred treaty: let men make the most of the hour!

And, back in Germany, the anabaptists yielded, in one year, one hundred and fifty thousand martyrs to the cause of their faith, with even grosser tortures than Rome had witnessed.

This was in May, 1527. Two years before, Sir Thomas Boleyn, Anne's father, had been created Viscount Rochfort. By 1527, Anne was recalled to court, and appointed to her old station in the queen's suite. At the same time that Rome was yielding its treasures to the pillaging imperial soldiers, a conference took place at Greenwich, between the bishop of Tarbez and Turenne, on the part of Francis, and Wolsey, for his royal master. The Princess Mary, released from her obligations to the emperor, was affianced to Francis of France, although this monarch had sworn, a year before, to wed Eleanora, the emperor's sister. Provision was made that, if Francis determined to keep his prior oath and marry the imperial sister, the dauphin of France should wed with Mary of England.

One thing happened at this conference that pleased Bluff Hal excessively. The French bishop called in question the legitimacy of Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon and the English king, on the ground that Catherine had been aforetime wedded and bedded by Henry's dead

brother, Arthur. Eighteen years married, and unaware for these years of the sin, Henry protested; but all at once his conscience, no doubt inflamed by visions of Mistress Anne, began to pain the English king excessively. What, he had been married illegally and incestuously for eighteen years? This must be looked into!

Henry paced his chamber alone, meditating what he contemplated. The Boleyn women were quick at loving; it was time he took another of the hot blood. And Anne would have him on no other terms . . . . Catherine was no wife for a king; three dead princes, when he should be ringed by heirs male . . . . Older than he, her beauty gone, her health gone . . . . a snivelling pious good queen, when a man wanted a live woman, not a prayer book, to bed with . . . .

But no word of Mistress Anne must be breathed, as yet. Wolsey had his own mind, which he had bared to the king; and it looked elsewhere. "The king's secret matter" it was called, in all the chronicles of the year . . . .

Word of this came to Catherine; she dispatched her faithful servant, Francis Phillips, to Spain, to complain to her nephew, the emperor. Wolsey intercepted this messenger. When she learned of this, she faced the king himself.

"Ah, my queen, I have no motive in this, but to have the truth searched out."

With this the queen had to be content. She was playing at cards with Anne her maid, when the maid stopped at a king.

Catherine spoke quietly: "My lady Anne, you have the good fortune to stop at a king. You are like others, you will have all or none."

Anne raised guileless eyes to her royal mistress. No more was said.

The king sought her out, and presented her with costly

jewels. He slid an arm around her waist, and whispered in her ears what he sought.

Anne fell on her knees, with the natural abhorrence of an ambitious woman. "These must be words of mirth, sire! I would rather lose my life than my virtue, which is the noblest dowry I will bring to my husband."

"And what of Francis of France? What of—"

"Sire, that lies between me, my confessor, and my God."

"You glorious wench! I shall continue to hope—"

"Henry," she rose beside him, "your wife I can not be, for you have a queen already. Your mistress I will not be."

"I shall continue to hope."

"That," said Mistress Anne prettily, "is a king's prerogative."

CHAPTER XIII

A Royal Lover

THE hands of Anne trembled, as she spread wide this first scroll of her royal lover:

To my Mistress.

As the time seems very long since I heard from you, or concerning your health, the great love I have for you has constrained me to send this bearer, to be better informed both of your health and pleasure . . . . It seems hard, in return for the great love I bear you, to be kept at a distance from the person and the presence of the woman in the world that I value the most . . . . Consider well, my mistress, how greatly your absence afflicts me . . . . Written by the hand of your entire Servant,

H. R.

Give all, gain nothing, she said shrewdly to herself. Withhold much, gain all . . . .

Another impetuous letter from his majesty:

I beseech you earnestly to let me know your real mind, as to the love between us two. It is needful for me to obtain this answer of you, having been a whole year wounded with the dart of love, and not yet assured, whether I shall succeed in finding a place in your heart and affection. This uncertainty has hindered me of late from declaring you my mistress . . . . But if you please to do the duty of a true and loyal mistress, and to give up yourself heart and person to me . . . . I promise you . . . . that I will take you for my mistress, casting off all others that are in competition with you, out of my thoughts and affections . . . .

Written by the hand of him who would willingly remain yours,

H. Rex.

Little speech of a pricking conscience here . . . . Anne came back to the queen's court—for these two letters had come to her before then—and, at the masque which concluded the midnight ball to the French ambassadors, the king gave public mark of his preference for Anne, by selecting her as his partner.

Anne had Wolsey picked as ambassador to France, to get him out of the land, and undermine his power in his absence. Wolsey's mind was set upon uniting the English king, once the annulment of the marriage with Catherine was achieved, to Renee, the sister of the dead queen Claude of France. Well, let him plot his way; it would come Anne's hour . . . .

In May of 1528 a dismal pestilence broke out at the court. The king had a sudden spasm of compunction. Home went Anne Boleyn to her friends; back went Henry to his faded queen and her fading devotions. His amusements consisted of compounding pills and lotions against the plague, with the aid of his physician. One of these was given to the whole kingdom of England, as "the king's own plaster." The king made his will—made another—made thirty-nine of them. Each day he confessed his sins, with a proper amount of discretion.

The pest abated, the king's good humor returned, he huffed away his wife and wrote again to his favorite.

Mine own Sweet Heart,

This shall be to advertise you of the great loneness that I find since your departing . . . . But now that I am coming towards you, me-thinketh my pains be half relieved . . . .

Campeggio, the cardinal legate, had arrived; in his

hands, and Wolsey's, was the disposal of the inquiry into the validity of the marriage of Henry and his queen. Wolsey, in his slim shrewdness, had told Rome that Catherine desired to retire from the world, and devote herself to a religious life, leaving Henry free to mate again. Henry held there would be no bar to his divorce: his sister, Margaret of Scotland, had put away her second husband, Angus, taken a third spouse, and was about to divorce him for a fourth husband; Louis XII of France had discharged his wife, Jane of Valois, as casually. In the autumn of 1528, when Campeggio arrived, Catherine learned what Wolsey had represented to the pope, and slew the rumor of her will with energy. She would never retire . . . .

Henry blazed out in anger. He went before his council, prating of a plot to kill the king and the cardinal; "in which conspiracy, if it could be proved the queen had any hand, she must not expect to be spared . . . . She has not shown in public, or in her hours of retirement, as much love for the king as she ought; and, now that the king was thoughtful, she manifested great signs of joy, setting all people to dancing and other diversions; this she did out of spite to the king . . . . From all which the king concluded that she hated him."

Wolsey penned a note in Latin at the end of this paper: "The queen is a fool to resist the king's will. Her offspring has not received the blessing of heaven. Moreover, the abstract of the pope's original bull of dispensation, separating her from her first husband, Arthur, which she received from Spain, is a forgery."

The king's stooping council penned a note to the king, to be shown to Catherine: "We advise you to separate yourself from the queen both at bed and board, and above all to take the Princess Mary from her."

Wolsey, in France, for all of his misgivings as to

Henry's real purpose, succeeded in securing the treaty desired, with the addition of a clause which Henry especially insisted upon: that, so long as the pope continued a prisoner in the hands of the emperor, the churches of England and France should be governed by their own bishops, in spite of any bull or breve which might come from the pontiff during his jail term; and that any decree of Wolsey, in his legatine court, should be carried out, though the pope himself forbid . . . . The volcano is shuddering and smoking; there will be the unflung lava soon enough . . . .

Back to England. "Touching this projected marriage with the sister of the queen of France, sire—" began Wolsey.

His royal lord snapped him short. "It is Mistress Anne Boleyn I will wed, and no other."

Wolsey had never cringed before. In France, the French king had been served by attendants who retained their caps on heads; not so that butcher's son of Ipswich, whose attendants served the dishes, cap in hand, and knelt as they presented them. When he had met the emperor at Bruges, the cardinal did not dismount from his mule, but casually doffed his cap, treating the emperor as his equal. But he cringed now before the will of Henry the second Tudor king. Down on his knees he flung himself: "For your realm's sake, sire, give by this mad project!"

"I have uttered my word. Not all the gods in heaven, or fiends in hell, could wean me from her whom I belove. For those who seek to cross this will . . . ."

One sight of the royal frown, and Wolsey was abject penitence. He rose stiffly, desolately. "I will aid your majesty in every way that man can do so."

Sunday afternoon, the 8th of November, 1528. The king's council, nobles, and judges all herded together into the great room of the palace at Bridewell . . . . Henry,

Bluff King Hal on his face, squirming guile in his heart, is speaking: "If it be adjudged that the queen is my lawful wife, nothing will be more pleasant or acceptable to me."

"The filthy liar!" grunted the butcher's son, to himself alone.

"But if it is determined that our marriage is against God's law, then I should sorrow, parting from so good a lady . . . . These be the pangs that trouble my conscience!"

In to Anne Boleyn went Henry, and told her how Wolsey had worn out the carpet, pleading against her . . . . how the venerable Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and the gifted Sir Thomas More, had offered lasting reasons against the divorce . . . .

Mistress Anne tapped with her toe on the carpet, where Wolsey's knees had been . . . . Her mind brightened to a view of a princess, worn from the dance, her seven veils at her feet, and a bleeding poll borne in unto her on a charger . . . . "It is no matter, Henry; in good time you will do as beseems best to you, in such matters." She, too, had learned to keep her own red counsels to herself.

Wolsey and Campeggio attended on Catherine, and notified her that they were to open an inquiry into the validity of her marriage.

Like a queen she spoke: "Handsome time to be bringing up whether I am the king's lawful queen or no, when I have been wed to him twenty years, and no question raised before! . . . . The king, my father, sent to the court of Rome, and there obtained a dispensation, that I, being the one brother's wife, might without scruple of conscience marry the other brother lawfully—which license under leaden seal I have yet to show. But as for you, my lord of York," the acid of her heart's wrath dribbling from her tense lips, "I may thank you, and you alone, for this trouble. I have even wondered

at your pride and vain glory, and abhorred your voluptuous life, and little cared for your presumption and tyranny."

"Madame—" implored the legate Campeggio.

A queenly hand stayed him in his chair. "No, he has kindled this fire, for the great grudge he bears my nephew the emperor, whom you hate worser than a scorpion—" turning again to the paling English cardinal, "—because he would not flatter your ambition, and rape Peter's chair for you, by blasphemous force of arms!"

"No, your majesty—"

The queen would hear no more . . . .

Meanwhile English horse and French soldiery had crossed the Alps, to liberate the pope; had reached Piacenza; and had lingered there. The pope saw what reeds these allies were; treated of ransom with his captors; and, getting them off their guard, disguised himself as a gardener, and escaped to the stronghold of Orvieto. Here he had been waited on by the English ambassadors, with congratulations and a request that the pontiff name Wolsey or some other to hear and decide the matter of the divorce, and to grant a dispensation to Henry to marry any other woman whomsoever, even if she were related to him in the first degree: provided always, that she were not the widow of his brother.

Glance at this, Clement VII, before you sign it. What is this talk of permitting Henry to marry a woman "even if she were related to him in the first degree"?

"Does the mad king desire to bed his mother, or his sister?" worried the pontiff.

The English ambassadors explained glibly. His Holiness knew the canon law: kinship was reckoned by the number of steps from the person, farthest from the common ancestor, up to that common ancestor in canon law. Thus a great-grandchild was related, in the third degree, alike to her great-grandfather, to her grandfather's brothers and sis-

ters, her parents' first cousins, and even to another great-grandchild down a different line. By common law it was different: here steps up and down were counted; so that a great-grandchild was related in the third degree to her great-grandfather; in the fourth, to her grandfather's brothers and sisters; in the fifth, to her parent's first cousins; in the sixth, to another great-grandchild down a different line.

"But what is all this talk? Does Henry purpose to marry a great-granddaughter, or a great-grandmother?"

"No, Your Holiness. We arrive slowly. Now, by the canon law, in the first degree, there are three possible relationships to a man: his mother; his brothers and sisters; and his children. His English majesty has no doubt dallied with the sister of Mistress Anne Boleyn, one Mary Boleyn, though there was no marriage between them. There is talk that he was familiar with the mother of Mistress Anne, the wife of Sir Thomas Boleyn—"

"I know him. He is called the pick-lock of princes, is he not? A notorious pander—"

"A goodly, godly knight, Your Holiness. He does pass by such a name, it is true. There is, further, talk that the king was familiar with the second wife of Sir Thomas, the step-mother of Mistress Anne Boleyn. There is talk—"

"England, I see, has grown loquacious. But proceed."

"—Talk," gulped the ambassadors, "that this Mistress Anne Boleyn may perchance be a natural daughter of Henry, by Sir Thomas Boleyn's first wife. It is not true talk, let me assure Your Holiness of that—"

"Then why this permission?" and the papal thumb obscured the odd clause.

"Ah, when people talk . . . . There was no marriage, in any of these cases. There is no real kinship, unless it be the fourth possibility; for, surely, merely bedding, without

marriage, with a sister, mother, or step-mother can not prevent a marriage. At least, authorities hold so . . . ."

"Enough. I will sign. I was a posthumous bastard myself, you recall, until it was determined that the duke my father had at least promised my frail mother to wed her, before he deflowered her. But keep you this paper secret . . . . Tell Henry your master that he chooses the most roundabout way to the lady's bed; we in Italy know quicker ways," with a subtle swift gesture, which caused the ambassadors to shiver.

In April, 1528, full power had been granted to Wolsey to try the cause, without judicial forms, according to his own conscience, with no right of exception or appeal, and to hold the marriage valid or invalid, and the issue legitimate or illegitimate . . . .

Wolsey blanched at this. Refuse the divorce, and Henry would end him. Grant it, and Spain and France were his enemies for ever. And so was this Boleyn bitch his enemy forever . . . . It was this consideration that had made him insist that Cardinal Campeggio, the most skillful diplomatist of the papal court, be joined as co-judge with him. He wrote, moreover, to the pope, imploring the Holy Father to grant the divorce himself; the decree might be secret, never given to the world; but it would ease the tender conscience of Wolsey.

Pity the poor king, with an itching conscience hung low; pity the poor cardinal, with an itching conscience placed in his neck, which was like to fall, either way he decided!

When Campeggio arrived in London, he had the papal bull in his hands. He was to be allowed to read it to the king, Mistress Anne, and Wolsey; but on no account to let it go out of his hands. Rather was he to sear it and his own hand in the brazier's flame.

In the great hall of the palace at Blackfriars the papal

court met. The two legates sat in chairs of cloth of gold, before a table covered with rich tapestry. To the right was a canopy, over a chair and cushions of tissue, for the king's fattening body. To the left stood a rich chair for the queen.

The king answered by two proctors. The queen entered, attended by four bishops and a train of ladies. She presented the original bull of dispensation, allowing her to marry her dead husband's brother. "Beyond that, I appeal from you two prejudiced judges, to Rome itself." With a flurry she and her train departed.

Ah, but the weasel wits that devised the trial had provided against the legitimacy of any appeal.

A dreary week, of endless witnesses and more endless arguments.

On June 18th, 1529, the king and queen were summoned to be present in person.

"Henry, king of England!" called out the crier.

"Here!" a loud reply from the canopy's cavern. Henry rose, delivered another oration as to his sorely plagued conscience.

"Catherine, queen of England!"

"I protest the legality of the court. These judges all hold benefices, presented by my opponent in this suit!"

Pish, what of that? meditated the king. Wolsey's bribes had ever been greater than the king's income; but this was with full royal leave. Fox had called him king, rather than cardinal; he signed himself "I and my king"; he had had his cardinal's hat and his "T. W." stamped on the royal coins. These things were moral; they had always been done; why should man or woman either seek to change what was unchangeable? How could justice function, without a constant oiling of its machinery by gigantic bribes?

Wolsey is speaking. "I must deny your appeal to Rome

on that, or any ground. The papal commission provides against appeal . . . ."

A nod to the crier.

"Catherine, queen of England!"

She paid no heed, but made devoutly the sign of the cross—of the suffering borne by that far-off founder of her faith. Her ladies behind her, she made the circuit of the court, and knelt down before her husband . . . . "Sire, I beseech you, ... let me have some right and justice! . . . . I put it to your conscience, whether I came not to you a maid?"

Henry looked in admiration at the mendaciously magnificent queen, and turned away.

"Sire, this twenty years have I been your true wife . . . . To God I commit my cause!"

She rose up in tears, and, blinded by them, walked forth from the court.

"Catherine, queen of England!" The crier's voice, a third time.

Griffith, the queen's receiver-general, on whose arm she leant, looked back. "Madam, you are called back."

She was no Lot's wife, no Eurydice. "I hear it, well enough. But on—on! Go you on, for this is no court where I can have justice. On, and straightway!"

Henry up again . . . . more drivel of his ailing conscience.

One thing Wolsey made the king do: hold the cardinal publicly blameless of having initiated the divorce. No, said Henry, it was the king's own confessor, and the demurs of the French ambassador, regarding the legitimacy of Catherine's daughter, the princess Mary . . . . "All the bishops in England signed the license for inquiry," said the king.

Fisher, aged bishop of Rochester, was on his feet. "I did not sign."

Henry flung the document on the great table. "There is your hand and seal!"

"Forgery!" cried the zealous defender of the Spanish queen.

Warham, the old archbishop of Canterbury, lifted a trembling hand. "Fisher permitted another to sign for him."

"A lie, your grace! If I had wished to sign it, could I not have put my own name to it, like any clerk?"

Fisher had been the king's tutor, as well as Master Skelton. One look Henry gave the old prelate; all knew what that look portended.

A week later, Catherine was summoned again. She refused to appear. She was declared contumacious, in the eyes of the heads of the faith. But her appeal to the pope was handed in; and she wrote to her nephew, the emperor, saying that she would die before she would stain the legitimacy of her daughter.

Henry raged in private to the two judges. "Grant the divorce, and have an end of this lallygagging!"

They consulted. "Papal courts never sit, in Rome, from July to October. We adjourn while that day . . . ."

Henry raged out of the chamber. It is not calming to cross the bull.

CHAPTER XIV

The Shadow of Thebes

HENRY betook himself to his adored mistress; and his mind was light, for all of the heavy delays. The Boleyn women had ever been kind to him. Elizabeth Howard, wife of Sir Thomas Boleyn, daughter of the earl of Surrey, had been a reigning beauty in Catherine's court, from its commencement. Henry had been only sixteen when her daughter, Anne, was born, in 1507; two years still from kingship. But she had been amiable to him; and it was flattering to think that gossip named him father of this adorable chit.

What if the foul-mouthed and fouler-minded reformers bleated of Thebes and its royal line, of a queen who mated with her son, and of what came of it; of Borgia the pope, who had bedded four generations of Vanozzas . . . . Man loved the deeds, and only man's cowardice built the beldame's stories of pain to follow . . . .

No man could know rightly . . . . Not even where Mistress Anne had been born, whether at fair Hever in Kent, or Rochford Hall in Essex, or Blickling Hall in Norfolk. Name it Blickling, where "Old Bullen's" ghost kept the dead ancestor's study forever under key and lock. Here the chit, her brother George, and Master Wyatt, who had grown to such stature as poet, played together as children. Here Sir Thomas, Anne's father, after his first wife's death of child-bed fever, had wedded a Norfolk commoner, gross enough to sate a lord's lust and a king's whim.

Then, in her French days, that note from Viscount Chateaubriant, a courtier of Francis I, whose countess had

been a bedmate of the French king . . . . "Mistress Anne is a poet, and sings like a second Orpheus, so that bears and wolves cease being salvage, and bark her melodious strains. In dancing the English steps, she leaps and jumps with infinite agility and grace, inventing countless new steps, to the delectation of the entire court. She sings like a siren, plays the lute like an angel, harps better than David dared do, and is exquisite with the rebec, the three-stringed violin. Her attire is exquisite; she has set the fashion for the dames of France; yet none equal her, tired or untired, for she is a very Venus for body."

Lightly the king hummed the late song,

> My love by her attire doth show her wit,
> It doth so well become her.
> She hath a dress for every season fit,
> For winter, spring, and summer.
> No beauty she doth miss,
> When all her robes are on;
> And beauty's self she is,
> When all her robes are gone.

Little imp, Wyatt had called her. "Blasé," a French courtier had named her . . . . worn out with sensual excesses. Francis' name was mentioned; and he had a keen nose for lightness in women. Well, who should be a king's woman, but a very queen in charity? Wyatt had had his love sessions with Anne, small doubt of it. He was a wedded man too, and a poet. Henry smiled grimly, as he recalled what Anne had told him, of Wyatt's filching from her a jewelled tablet, which hung enchained from her pocket. This he wore thereafter about his neck under his cassock, and sought ever to win her more closely, to Henry's abiding jealousy; but, in the king's presence, she ever turned prettily from him. Pleased with this, Henry had sought to bed her illicitly; this

failing, he had made his treaty of marriage, taking from her a ring, which he ever thereafter wore on his little finger.

Yet Wyatt had persisted, inscribing to the king's mistress his lovely song

Then since that by thine own desert
My songs do tell how true thou art,
Blame not my Lute! . . . .

Farewell, unknown; for though thou break
My strings in spite with great disdain,
Yet have I found out, for thy sake,
Strings for to string my Lute again;
And if perchance this silly rhyme
Do make thee blush at any time,
Blame not my lute!

Was ever reign so blessed with a rain of divine poesie! The king's self, Mistress Anne, her brother George, Wyatt, Master Skelton, and many a moe . . . .

"Your majesty is the greatest poet England has ever known, or ever will," flattered Skelton, after hearing Henry's great song:

Pastime with good company
I love, and shall until I die.
Grudge who lust, but none deny,
So God be pleased, thus live will I.
For my pastime, hunt, sing, dance,
My heart is set;
All goodly sport for my comfort,
Who shall me let?

The king had retorted, by naming Skelton again his laureate, for his exquisite numbers:

Maidenly demure,
Of womanhood the lure,
Wherefore I make you sure . . . .

To hear this nightingale,

Among the birdes small,
Warbling in the vale:—

Dug, dug,
Jug, jug!
Good year and good luck,
With chuk, chuk, chuk, chuk!

"There can be no sweeter song!" Henry had said, then.

Then had come Sir Thomas Wyatt's clever query of the robin, concerning his leman or mistress:

"Ah! Robin!
Jolly Robin!
Tell me how thy leman doth,
And thou shalt know of mine . . . .

"I find no such doubleness;
I find women true.
My lady loveth me doubtless,
And will change for no new.

"Happy art thou while that doth last;
But I say as I find:
That woman's love is but a blast,
And turneth like the wind."

And then the clever retort of the bird,

"But if thou wilt avoid thy harm,
This lesson learn of me;
At others' fires thyself to warm,
And let them warm with thee."

At others' fires . . . . Even then he guessed Mistress Anne to be the king's, though there was this talk of warming . . . .

Anne's brother had written that exquisite song:

My lute, awake, perform the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And end that which I have now begun,

And, when this song is past and done,
My lute, be still, for I have done!

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave in marble stone,
My song shall pierce her heart as soon:
Should we, then, sigh or sing or moan?
No, no, my lute, for I have done!

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually,
As she my suit and affection;
So that I am past remedy:
Whereby my lute and I have done!

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got,
Of simple hearts through Love's shot,
By whom unkind thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done!

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,
That mak'st but game of earnest pain,
Trow not alone under the sun
Unquit to cause thy lover's plain,
Although my lute and I have done.

Now cease, my lute, this is the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And ended is that we begun:
Now is this song both sung and past—
Be still, my lute, for I have done.

Mayhap this was Wyatt's song, as so many had said. Anne had repulsed his suit and affection, no doubt of that—at least, while Henry was by.

The king grinned grouchily. There had been the day when he was at the bowls with Suffolk, Sir Francis Brian, and Wyatt. In high good humor, the king had insisted that in the cast of the bowl he had outdone Wyatt.

"By your leave, sire, it is not so," Wyatt and his partner both at one in this.

Henry pointed with his finger at the ring Anne had given him, and had said, for Wyatt's ear alone, "I tell thee, Wyatt, it is mine."

Wyatt, recognizing the ring, had closed his eyes a trifle. Then from his bosom he took the chain, whereon hung Anne's tablet, and said briskly, "If it please your majesty to give me leave to measure the cast with this, I have good hopes it will yet be mine."

He measured it so, and claimed the cast.

"If it be so," said Henry in tall dudgeon, "then I am deceived!" And in this huff the game had ended. Anne had protested, when Henry bared this to her, that the tablet had been taken from her by force.

"Was aught else taken from you by force, on that day?"

"Not by force, sire," she had answered prettily, "nor on that day, if I remember well."

With this wit he had had to be content. He had labored diligently at his love-letters to her:

> My Mistress and My Friend,
>
> My heart and I surrender ourselves into your hands . . . . Absence has placed distance between us, nevertheless fervor increases—at least, on my part . . . .

And again,

> I wish you in my arms . . . . I would we were together an evening . . . .

Could he forget one word of it? And out of it all he had declared fairly to Anne and her father that he was of a mind to make her his consort, once he were released from his present marriage. From Eltham or Greenwich he was ever riding, as on this day, to Hever Castle. Here before

him was the hill. He put bugle to lips, and gave his call . . . . She would be in his arms anon, with more pressure on her lips from great Norfolk, and other great relatives, who desired with the king to end this fiddle-faddling delay as to the matter of the divorce. Never again would he retire her to Hever, where she smoked, as men said, with anger . . . . He had given her already the revenues of the see of Durham, the metropolitan part, and let her and her father live in the episcopal palace; he had even granted her, with Wolsey's aid, the vaster palace of Suffolk House. Beside this was Whitehall, the cardinal's palace, which Henry borrowed, to lie nearer his heart's desire.

And now he was to open another plan to Anne. Christmas he was to spend with his family at Greenwich; and thither must Anne accompany him, lest he be deprived of her an hour. She bore herself like a queen already, even blessing rings against the cramps, which only a queen could bless. Let the whole shadow of ancient Thebes hang over his head, he would have her, willy-nilly, though he blast Christendom to bits in his hot will!

CHAPTER XV

Queen Nan

ANNE worked upon Henry, with consummate success. She sent him back to the butcher's son, in an utter agony of impatience for the ending of the dead sea marriage, and the consummation of the second. Wolsey arrived; and the king, for an hour, unloosed the floodgates of his rutting anguish, his unbridled insistent lust. Wolsey, shaken by the other's torment, went to his barge, where the bishop of Carlisle waited in it, at Blackfriars Stairs.

"It's a warm day, your grace," ventured the bishop.

"By God, if you had been chafed as I have, you would say it was, not warm, but blistering!"

To bed at last, relieved by the ministrations of several of his attendant maidens. He had scarce been in bed in Whitehall two hours, when the palace shook with a gauntleted hand, demanding admittance.

"It is I, Sir Thomas Boleyn, with word from His Majesty."

In came the messenger, and disclosed that the king demanded that the cardinal repair at once to Bridewell Palace, that he might, with Campeggio, wait on the queen in the morning, to propose a private settlement.

Wolsey, outraged at this breach of his living, scolded the newly-created earl of Wiltshire for his eagerness in the matter. The poor pick-lock of princes dropped to his knees beside the cardinal's bed, and wept bitterly all the time the prelate was attiring himself . . . .

Early the same morning Wolsey and Campeggio came

by water to Bridewell, and demanded a private interview with the queen. She sat at work among her maids, and came to them in the audience chamber, a skein of red silk about her neck.

"Let us go into the privy chamber," said Wolsey, distastefully viewing the maids about her.

"My lord, if you have aught to say, speak it openly before these folk, for there is naught about me but what the whole world may know."

Wolsey commenced speaking in Latin.

"English, your grace; though I do know some Latin, I know English thoroughly."

Wolsey unfolded Henry's message. Catherine could have all she could make in riches and honors, and have the princess Mary next in succession to issue by the second marriage, if she would consent to the divorce.

Catherine put them off; and so powerfully did her answer effect both legates, that thereafter both were on her side. After all, Catherine's sister had been married to her dead husband's brother, Emanuel I of Portugal; Emanuel, in turn, had wedded this sister's sister, Maria, a second of Catherine's sisters . . . . It was in the family. There could be no sin in this Catherine, for all her deflowering by Arthur, Henry's brother, after lawful marriage, and her later marriage, under papal permission, to Henry himself . . . .

The legatine court met at last. Henry demanded judgment; Campeggio spoke for both judges, refusing to pass upon the matter, and stating that it must be referred to the pontiff in Rome. The court was then dissolved. Truly, Henry had chosen the slower way.

The duke of Suffolk, the king's brother-in-law, smashed down with his fist on the great table, in the very presence of the legates. "By God's grace, no good has ever come to England, since cardinal came among us!"

Wolsey stared solidly at the presumptuous layman. "Without the intervention of one cardinal at least, the duke of Suffolk would have lost his head, and with it the opportunity to revile such sacred servants of God!"

Well, Henry and Catherine were still yoked together, in the eyes of the law, however much he might pull from her. A royal progress together; but Anne Boleyn went along, although Catherine hid her resentment. After all, she had stomached Mary Boleyn as Henry's known mistress; a second sister could not impeach her queenly state . . . .

At Grafton, in Northamptonshire, Campeggio and his gout bade farewell to the king. Wolsey went along; but the king's attendants almost drove him from the royal abode, while Henry winked at this. Anne was furious with Wolsey for his ancient interference with her marriage to Percy. She was raging against him for securing a stolen volume of Tindal's translation of the Bible, the first that had reached the court, which had come to Wolsey's hands, and which he detained, until Henry demanded its release. She was furious with him for suborning the people to pass through the streets, even before the very palace, screaming out, "We'll have no Anne Bullen!" "Nan Bullen shall not be our queen!"

Anne bided her time, until Wolsey was entangled with Catherine against the divorce, and indiscreetly put this in letters addressed to Rome. These Anne secured through her kinsman Sir Francis Bryan, and took them to Henry. Her uncle, Norfolk, and the king's brother-in-law, Suffolk, even her unhappy former love Percy, aided her in her fierceness.

Her hour came. Wolsey, after many repulses, secured kingly leave to come with Campeggio, when the latter bade farewell. Fearfully he went to his knee, as the resplendent Tudor entered. Now was the time for the king to spurn the butcher's son . . . .

A sudden revulsion of feeling . . . . Henry raised up the fallen cardinal with both hands, and led him to the window, for a long private conference. After this, he went to dine with Mistress Anne, and she berated him for his kindness to the cardinal, "who had made him the debtor of every man in England," since Wolsey had invented, so the wise men said, royal loans.

In spite of this, the king granted Wolsey another long talk. He promised another session in the morning. This Anne prevented, by persuading the king to ride off with her. They rode together to visit the king's new Harewell Park. Here Anne had provided a sylvan feast, and a chance to dally with her afterwards . . . .

"One thing you must promise me, Harry . . . . Never to speak word to my lord the cardinal again."

In this seeking mood, a man can not resist a woman's plea. "You have my word," said Henry the king. He kept the word thereafter.

Now a sudden tragedy: the disappearance of Henry's love letters to Anne, from the royal cabinet of York House. No doubt, this cardinal, Campeggio, was carrying them to the pope his master. What matter kingly etiquette? Under Henry's seal, the cardinal's baggage was broken open at Dover, and searched thoroughly. The churchly weasel had already sent the letters ahead, where they were spread in the Vatican for the world to see . . . .

Little they found; but all England roared over what happened in Fleet Street, when a mule of Wolsey's, bearing his brother cardinal's luggage, ran away, stumbled, burst the fardels and portmanteaus, and exhibited to the world the wealth of the legate . . . . Old shoes, patched gaberdines, ancient garments of all kinds, with a mixture of roasted eggs and dry crusts . . . . Poor starved legate and his train, blaring to the world the poverty of his old faith!

Anne had not begun her vengeance. On October 9th, two bills were filed against Wolsey by the attorney-general, charging him with exercising his legatine authority illegally in England.

Wolsey stared his oncoming fate sternly in the face. "I know there is a night crow that holds the royal ear against me, and warps all my actions. Well, exsufflate and blown surmises have ever been the ruin of noble men."

By Christmas, the cardinal sent word that he was sore sick, and like to die, word that came to Greenwich, where the king was with the queen and the princess Mary. He was considerate to her; for her appeal in Rome still pended, and he besought her to withdraw it. Let any four prelates or secular lawyers in England decide her cause . . . . No, it must be Rome . . . . In a pet, Henry broke up the court diversions, and after Easter retired to Whitehall.

In Whitsuntide, of 1531, the king sent a deputation to the queen at Greenwich, announcing that he had, by Cranmer's advice, secured the opinions of the universities of Europe as to the validity of his marriage, and found several which considered it illegal; and again begged her to lay the matter before four English prelates and four nobles. "God give my husband a quiet conscience," she answered stiffly. "I abide by no decision, but Rome's."

Henry received this . . . . his face was a storming cloud. After the festival of Trinity, he accompanied the queen back to Windsor. On the 14th of June, he left the royal castle, and sent Catherine orders to vacate it, before his return.

She faced the blow, spirit half broken. "Go where I may, I am his wife still!"

She never thereafter beheld her husband, or her child.

She first went to the manor of the More, in Hertford-

shire; then to Ampthill, from which place she wrote Pope Clement of her expulsion.

Wolsey was well again, not by grace of Henry's physician, who had said to the king, on being dispatched the Christmas before to the cardinal's bedside, "If you would have him dead, I warrant you he will be dead within four days from the time I arrive." Henry forbade this, and sent him a token of good will, having Anne do as much.

Norfolk, Anne's uncle, sent a savage message to Wolsey: "If you do not depart instantly for the North, I will tear you with my own teeth!"

Tyndale or Tindal was on the king's side; Mistress Anne herself had put into the royal hands a book by Master Tindal, stating that all authority rested in the king's hands. Henry read it with avidity; "This is a book for me, and for all kings, to read." Cranmer, expert with hawk and hounds; masterly horseman; wedded, while fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, to "Black Joan," kin to the landlady of the Dolphin Inn, and restored to the fellowship on his wife's death in childbirth before the end of the year of grace allowed by the statute; a divine, lecturer and examiner at Cambridge on divinity, and remarried in 1531 to the daughter of Osiander of Nurember; this wily man had said, as early as 1529, that the ordinary ecclesiastical courts could annul the marriage, if Arthur and Catherine had really been wedded. Henry had cried out in glee: "I will speak to him! This man, I trow, has got the right sow by the ear!" Now came Cromwell, former satellite of Wolsey, to add the weight of his name.

The pope wrote to Henry, privately exhorting him to take home Queen Catherine, and put away one "Anna." A public instrument from Rome reconfirmed the legality of Henry's marriage to Catherine, and legitimatized their offspring anew. This staggered the English king; but Crom-

well, apostate from Wolsey, came forward grimly. "Divorce your English church from the ungodly supremacy of Rome, sire . . . . You will get your Anne, and at the same time take over the Romish wealth in churches and cathedrals, monasteries and nunneries, throughout England!"

1532 . . . . Warham, the old archbishop of Canterbury, died. This was August. The king sent word to Cranmer, off with the emperor on a junket against the Turks, that he was to fill the vacant see, wife and all. Cranmer was puzzled; he sent his wife to England, and temporized, hoping that the king would name another. The papal bulls of confirmation were dated February and March, 1533; the consecration took place on March 30th. England had an archbishop now who had buried one wife, and had a second . . . . Cranmer, on taking the oath, stipulated that any allegiance to the pope that he owed must not conflict with his supreme duty to his king . . . . The Romish chains were cracking . . . .

There was no more Wolsey, to dim the English sun. The defeated cardinal had declined to plead at all to the two indictments against him; he knew the ravening temper of his royal master. He owned his guilt, resigned his seals, gave in to every demand, stripped himself of his personal property, and threw himself wholly on the king's mercy. "I would give up even the shirt on my back, and live in an hermitage, if once Henry would smile on me again!"

The king himself was done with smiling in this direction. He took over York Palace, banishing Wolsey to his house at Esher, where the cardinal and his family continued there the space of three or four weeks without beds or sheets, without tablecloths, cups, or dishes. The pope ignored him. On Maundy Thursday, he washed, wiped, and kissed the feet of fifty-nine poor men, giving to each, out of his slim store, twelve pence in money, three ells of canvas for shirts,

a pair of new shoes, a cask of mead, three red herrings and three white ones, and, to the odd person, two shillings.

Anne was not through with the fallen man yet. On November 4th, he was arrested on charge of high treason, and lodged in the Tower. He remained at Shrewsbury's Sheffield Park eighteen days; and here his health collapsed. Twenty-four of the Guard came from London, under Sir William Kingston, to squire him to the Tower. The dropsy plagued him mightily; a dysentery seized him, which confined him to bed for a fortnight; he mounted his mule weakly, but when he arrived at the abbey of Leicester, he said to the abbot, "I am come to lay my bones among you."

He summoned Kingston to him, and spoke feelingly. "Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, He would not have given over my gray hairs." On the next morning, the butcher's son of Ipswich died.

Sir Thomas More became chancellor. Fifty-two years old now . . . . Educated for the church; giving this up for the law; swinging back to monkish discipline, hair shirt, self-scourging, sleeping on the ground with a log under his head, and the rest of it; converted from clerical celibacy by three sisters, the oldest of whom he married; witty, judging Henry Tudor as the rutting bull he was; honest . . . . what an amazing chancellor! He refused all gifts, all bribes . . . . He meant the exquisite picture he had drawn in his *Utopia*. Much he could stomach; but he could not stomach the king's marriage with Anne Boleyn. He was let out, as chancellor, midway of 1532. Henry never forgave him for his scruples . . . .

From Wolsey's death onward, Henry held no intercourse with his former queen. Anne left her father's house, lived under the same roof with the king, ate at the same table with him, joined in his councils—had not Lucrezia Borgia, in deshabille, presided over the councils of state of

Alexander VI?—was always present at public ceremonials, private amusements, journeys. For three whole years this pretty relationship continued.

The records of the king's privy purse show where his will blew. November 22 preceding.

> Paid to Cecil, for a yard and a quarter of purple velvet for Mistress Anne, xij s. viii d.
> The same day paid to Walter Walsh, for certain stuff prepared for Mistress Anne of divers persons, 216 £. 9 s. 8 d.
> December 31, 1529, paid to Mistress Anne, 110 l.
> May 29, for bows, arrows, shafts, broadheads, brazier, and shooting-glove, for the lady Anne, 1 £. 3 s. 4 d.
> September 8, paid for cow that Urian, the lady Anne's Breton greyhound, had killed, 10 s.

There were many more.

A mysterious book was placed in "Queen Nan's" chamber one day. The future could be read from it. Anne studied it devoutly, and learned that, if she married the king, her certain destruction would follow. She called her maid, young Anne Saville, to her: "Come hither, Nan. See, here is a book of prophecies! This is the king, this is the queen, wringing her hands and mourning; and this is myself, with my head cut off."

Little Anne Saville was shocked. "If I thought that true, I would not have the man, were he an emperor!"

Gaily laughing, "Tut, Nan! I am resolved to have him, that my children may be royal, whatever may become of me . . . ."

A pretty tale, repeated everywhere . . . .

Sly Sir Thomas Boleyn, earl of Wiltshire now, in the spring of 1830 was sent, by Henry, to a conference between the emperor and the pope, at Bologna. His Holiness stuck forth his toe, for Wiltshire to kiss. Too much for the pick-

lock of princes. He recoiled from the bared papal toe; though not saying, as Prince Zizim had of the Borgia pope, "How can I kiss a baboon's toe?"

He did not say it; but Wiltshire's dog said it, in his own canine fashion. Leaping forward, the dog took a bite out of the holiest toe in Christendom.

These dreadful English! So impetuous—even to their dogs!

For all of the king's gifts, Mistress Anne was constantly in debt; and Henry indulgently saved her, in each instance. Word from Europe was not encouraging: Luther had said, "I would rather allow Henry two wives, than dissolve his present marriage." The pope had already proposed this secretly to Cassalis; but this went no further, since neither Catherine nor Anne would be pleased at this joint partnership in the favors of the fattening monarch.

The privy records of Henry again:

May, 1532, 22 Flemish ells of gold arras, at 46 s. 8 d. a yard, 74 £. 12 s. 4 d.

May 22, paid the sergeant of the cellar, for that he won it of my lady Anne at the bowls, paid by the king's command, 12 £. 7 s. 6 d.

Anne had been the most fascinating wench in Europe once. She was so no longer. Delays, delays, delays . . . . Public insults to Queen Nan: "We will have no Nan Bullen to reign over us!" Carlo Capello, the Venetian ambassador, writing back to his senate, "My lady Anne is not the most beautiful in the world; her form is irregular and flat, her flesh has a swarthy tinge, she has a long neck, a large mouth, but very fine black eyes. It is generally reported that she has borne a son to the king, who died soon after his birth."

On May 29th, a cloak, made of black satin, edged with velvet and lined with velvet and buckram, for the lady Anne, 9 £. 4 s. 8 d.; a night-gown, also of black satin, lined

with black taffeta, stiffened with buckram, trimmed with black velvet, 10 £. 15 s. 8 d.

On September 1st, the king named his mistress marchioness of Pembroke . . . . A monarch ought to surround his throne with many peers of the worthiest of both sexes, especially those of royal blood, explained the king: "We, by the consent of the nobility of our kingdom present, do make, create, and ennoble our cousin Anne Rochford, one of the daughters of our well-beloved cousin Thomas earl of Wiltshire and of Ormand, keeper of our privy seal, to be marchioness of Pembroke, and also by putting on of a mantle, and the setting of a coronet of gold on her head, do really invest unto her the name, title, et cetera, and to her heirs male." The first female peer ever created.

The great ceremony at Greenwich . . . . Garter king-at-arms in front, bearing the king's patent of nobility . . . . Mary, daughter of the duke of Norfolk, following, the robe of state on her left arm, made of crimson velvet, furred with ermine, and in her right hand lifting a coronet of gold. Next, Nan herself, her hair loose about her shoulders, attired in a surcoat or inner garment of crimson velvet, lined with ermine, short-sleeved . . . . The countess of Rutland on her one hand, the countess of Sussex on her other. Gifts rained on her, including a pension of a thousand pounds a year . . . . also cups, flagons, bowls, trenchers, goblets with covers bearing the royal arms, spoons, salts, chandeliers, a chafing-dish, of gold, silver, and parcel-gilt plate, all costing 1188 £. 11 s. 10 d. Anne had her train-bearer, three ladies of the bed-chamber, four maids of honor, three gentlemen in waiting, six knightly officers, thirty domestics. Her sister had never had as much . . . .

Henry and Francis were to meet in France; the English king proposed that Anne accompany him. France accepted,

discreetly puzzled: "Nevertheless it will be desirable", wrote the ambassador of France to his monarch, "that the king of France bring no company of ladies, indeed there is always better cheer without them, but in case they must come, he had better bring only the queen of Navarre to Boulogne. As for the queen of France, not for the world would Henry meet her, for he says he would as soon see the devil as a lady in Spanish dress." Not quite flattering to Anne, all this; nor to Spanish costumes either.

Wyatt gave over his chances of success with the soaring Anne now, in an exquisite song:

Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant,
So great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet when first began
The weary life, you know—since when
The suit, the service none can tell.
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrongs, the scornful ways,
The painful patience and delays.
Forget not yet.

Forget not, oh! forget not this,
How long ago hath been and is
The love that never meant amiss.
Forget not yet.

Forget not now thine own approved,
The which so constant hath thee loved,
Whose steadfast faith has never moved
Forget not yet.

And so black-eyed Nan and her king, his body growing bloated and unwieldy, set off for France and its pleasures.

CHAPTER XVI

The Second Daughter

"THERE has never been land in the world," the king's head gardener explained carefully to his sire, just before the trip to France, "so blessed as England. Even back in the days of dead Dan Chaucer, we had the cherry and the plum, the peach tree and the laurel, and even the bay-tree. God in his grace saw fit to deprive us for a space of these blessings; but, in the reign of your queen—your first queen, sire," with a look askance at the interested black-eyed woman beside the king, "one by one these were brought from abroad, and throve amazingly on English soil. There were no salads in England, till your majesty sent for a gardener from Flanders, to cultivate them."

"True, true; and you had something of import, you say, to communicate to me?"

"Ay, sire." Slowly and methodically he spoke, like a sober Britisher. "The land had no carrots, and no edible roots whatever, even the cabbages coming all from Holland. Do not forget, sire,

> Hops and turkeys, carps and beer,
> Came to England all in one year."

"This is no doubt vastly diverting to you; but what have I to do with all this?"

"I come to that, sire. This year your most gracious majesty has recompensed certain poor women for bringing you gifts of apples, pears, barberries, peaches, artichokes, filberts, and other curious fruits. I have myself, as have the under-gardeners from Beaulieu, Greenwich, and Hampton,

presented your majesty with grapes, oranges, cucumbers, melons, cherries, strawberries, pomegranates, citrons—"

"Will you have end?"

"—plums, lettuces, and, to briefen the roll, every kind of luxury for the table that the ends of the world might furnish. I have something of great import for your majesty. Sire, do you see this!" Holding aloft in triumph a strange brown-wrinkled object, like a henbane root or a very mandrake.

"I see it, in God's mercy. And what might it be?"

"Sire, this is the strangest, the worthiest, and the most precious root in the world! My brother is married to one of these spaniels, sire, who came over with your first lady. She, my brother's wife I mean to imply, has a brother, a mariner, not worth the bread to feed him, but a prodigious traveler and picker-up of unconsidered trifles here, there, and everywhere. He bought this of a native in Hispaniola, who had it from a missionary, who got it from a red lord on the mainland. It is called papa, and by some battata, and by others potato. I shall put it in the ground—"

"That dung-root will grow?" the astounded king answered.

"Sire, it was to receive your blessing upon it, that I have held you here so long. If your most gracious Christian majesty once deign to bless it, and your noble lady too," with a tactful nod toward the impatient Anne, "it can not fail to grow and multiply! We will have battata trees of it, and, when as your majesty returns from France, or soon thereafter, I look to seeing your majesty plucking fruit from its lowest branches. For these Indian trees grow at a most prodigious rate, so that they overshadow a palace, I have been told, within a twelve-months. If you will deign to bless it, sire . . . ."

The king, Anne assisting, duly blessed it; and, on the

13th of October, arrived at Dover, to set sail the following morning for Calais. At ten in the forenoon of the same day they arrived, and the grand master of France set a present of grapes and pears to the fair Nan.

"But no battatas, God be praised!" said Henry piously. "Next time we come to France, we shall come bearing hampers of this devil-fruit from the New World."

At Boulogne, a week later, France met them; and the two sovereigns advanced bareheaded, and embraced like friends. Francis was not accompanied by queen, or sister, or any ladies; which grieved England's mistress. Bad enough to have the scurrilous English crowds hissing and nose-thumbing her in the streets; and, here in France . . . . Well, time would cure that.

Back to Calais, to a banqueting chamber hung with tissue, raised with silver, and framed with cloth of silver, raised with gold. The seams were wreathed with gold, set with stones and pearls. There was a cupboard seven stages high, all plate of gold; the whole lighted by ten branches of silver, and ten of white silver, each branch hanging by a silver chain, upholding each two lights of wax. There were only three courses to the dinner: the first course being of forty dishes, the second of sixty, the third of eighty.

After supper, on Sunday evening, eight ladies came in unto the monarchs, strangely masked, in tires of cloth of gold slashed with crimson tinsel satin, puffed out with cloth of silver, and knit with laces of gold. The first lady took the French king, the second took the king of Navarre, and every lady took a lord. One by one Henry removed the visors of the ladies, so that their matchless beauty could be shown. By this it was discovered that Navarre danced with the countess of Derby, and France with the marchioness of Pembroke, whom as Mistress Anne Boleyn he had aforetime tumbled, to his great content. Francis led the marchioness

apart, and spoke of matters of no general interest, but to them twain, and the next morning sent her a jewel, whose least worth was put at fifteen thousand crowns.

Back to Dover and England . . . . back to cards and dice, the chief sport of the royal pair. The king was a great wagerer, and a constant loser. On the 20th of November following, he lost to Nan, as his privy-purse book shows, 9 £. 6 s. 8 d. at Pope Julius's game, which some call Pope Joan, who some say ascended Peter's chair after fourth Leo, and whom an angel of God appeared to, offering to let her secret be undiscovered, for which she would burn in hell forever, or to let it be published to the world, and share thereafter in God's mercies. It is told that Joan chose the more pious way, was delivered of a child on her way to St. Peter's, and died soon thereafter, and ascended into heaven. Others of late hold that none such pope ever ruled; which, the wise men pointed out to Henry, was a shrewd way to alter errors of the past into matter fit for the ignorant laity to know. In any case, there is no doubt but that the game, with its points of matrimony, intrigue, pope, and the stops, received its names from the retarded lusts of Henry and Anne.

Henry and Anne were married. It was high time, for a child was promised to the fair Anne, whether or not she had already borne a son to the king, who died privily and was put away, as many say. The day of the marriage was held secret, so that some aver it took place on St. Erkenwald's day, at Dover, when they landed from France; while others hold it took place in the chapel of Sopewell Nunnery, whereto Anne retired, to meet Henry at a yew-tree a mile from the cloisters, for pleasant dalliance. Still more say that the wedding was at Blickling Hall, where aforetime some say that Anne was born, but none can say certainly of this matter. Sir Thomas Wyatt is of another opinion, asserting

fiercely that the mating took place on St. Paul's day, January 25, 1533, in an unpeopled attic in the west turret of Whitehall.

The chaplain hesitated, when his royal master ordered him to wed the enciente marchioness to the king's person.

"Tush, man, the Holy Pope in Rome has already ratified the divorce; I hold the dispensation for this marriage in my own possession. Hie, then . . . ."

Heads had fallen in England before this . . . . The chaplain spoke the words.

George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, was sent privily to Francis, to bespeak the marriage to him. Henry's counsellors all advised against the marriage; even Cranmer did not learn of it till a fortnight later. Anne remained in retirement; but, since an heir was expected, it was needful to spread to England what had occurred.

On Easter eve, April 12th, the king again solemnized a marriage with Anne, openly this time. On May 8th Cranmer, who had been consecrated archbishop of Canterbury six weeks before, held public tribunal at Dunstable, to pronounce on the king's former marriage. Two weeks the proceedings lasted; and on the 23rd Cranmer announced that the king's marriage with Catherine had been, and was, a nullity, and invalid, having been contracted against the expressed law of God himself. Five days after, at Lambeth, he gave judicial confirmation to Henry's wedding with Anne.

Now for the coronation, with all of England's nobility doing honor to the new queen. The Lord Mayor and his civic train embarked at New Stairs at one o'clock, in a barge containing a band playing on shalms and shag-bushes, or oboe-like shawns and trumpet-like sackbuts. Blare out your goodly harmonies; blow till you split your cheeks; for here is a queen, who holds already in her womb tomorrow's

greatness! Fifty barges of the city companies followed behind the Lord Mayor. Every boat and wherry in London followed after; and so to Greenwich: with the fast-sailing foist leading all, bristling with falcons and semi-falcons, culverin, chambers, and other small guns. On the deck of the foist is a capering dragon, twirling a long tail, and spitting wild-fire perpetually into Thames. About the dragon sported monsters and salvage men, very terrible, who vomited wild-fire. Ever and anon one of the guns went off, dinning the ears of the thrilled commonalty.

Right of the lord mayor was the bachelor's barge; left of it was Anne's own device on another foist: a mount, ringed with virgins singing her praises in sweet choralling. From the mount rose a stem of gold, with white and red roses: York and Lancaster from one stem. In their midst, a white falcon crowned, above the queen's humble motto, "Me and Mine." Flags, flags, flags, fluttering in the mild May air, each pennon tinkling with the bell attached to it. To Greenwich, past it, turn about, the lower orders to return to London, the Lord Mayor and his people to disembark and ring their melodies in Anne's slightly aging ear.

At three, the great door of the palace swung open, and Anne, ringed by fair maidens, stepped forth. So into her barge, trumpet and wind-instrument blaring hosanna to the English god. So up Thames to before the Tower, where a marvellous peal of guns were shot off together.

In the ominous fortress, Henry waited for his bride. She landed; the lord chamberlain and the heralds squired her to the king, who met her at the postern by the water-side. So through that evening the dragon and the monsters capered and spit fire. The womb of England spewed forth its sweaty thousands of madly cheering commoners, who caroused till cockcrow. There was pleasant pastime within the Tower also.

For some days the royal twain sojourned at the Tower, while the King named seventeen knights of the Bath, as attendants on the coronation. Last day of May . . . . the royal progress of a queen through her London. An English queen, and no Spaniard, this time! The city was gravelled throughout, and one side of the street railed off, lest the people be trampled by the curvetting horses. Cornhill and Gracechurch Street were clouded with scarlet and gold, Cheapside with gold and velvet.

Here comes the procession . . . . The French ambassador's retinue first, in blue velvet and sleeves of yellow and blue; the judges next, followed by the new-made knights, in violet gowns and hoods purfled with miniver. The abbots, the nobles, the bishops . . . . His grace of York beside the ambassador from Venice, Cranmer of Canterbury beside the French ambassador. Then two esquires wearing the ducal coronet of Normandy and Aquitaine, the robes rolled baldric-wise and worn across the breast. The Lord Mayor, with his mace and Garter . . . . William Howard, earl marshal, deputy for Norfolk, absent in France . . . . Suffolk, lord high constable, bearing his silver verge: Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, his royal spouse then on her death-bed. Then—here she is! It's Anne! Queen Anne! The queen—in an open litter, covered with cloth of gold shot with white, the two palfreys all white damask, led by the queen's footmen. She is dressed, the queen, in a surcoat of silver tissue, with a mantle of silver tissue lined with ermine; her dark tresses ripple down her shoulders, below a coif circled with rubies. And the canopy over her, borne by four knights on foot . . . . Her chancellor before the litter, her chamberlain, Lord Borough, behind it . . . . It's the master of the horse, William Cosyns, leading the queen's own palfrey,—that's the queen's side-saddle . . . . Why, the horse has no feet, for the cloth

of gold trailing the ground around him: Why watch more? But here are seven ladies, in crimson velvet trimmed with gold, on their palfreys; here are chariots in scarlet and gold, with Norfolk's lady and the marchioness of Dorset queening it from them . . . . The court ladies, the guard, their coats gay with beaten gold . . . . Never before or since . . . .

A pause at Fenchurch Street, where a pageant of children apparelled as merchants welcome the queen. At Gracechurch Street, a marvelous cunning pageant, made by the merchants of the Still-yard, of Mount Parnassus, with Apollo, a bit tipsy, making speeches in honor of the glorious day; the fountain of Helicon in their midst, with four jets thrice the height of a man, running with right good Rhenish wine all day. Stick your snouts in till you snuffle with surfeit, you sweaty rabble! Not every day will such a queen be crowned, even in Bluff King Hal's merry hour!

The falcon pageant, an angel flying down to queen the queen's bird . . . . St. Anne nearby, and an oration on her fruitfulness . . . . Cornhill's conduit fronted the three Graces, with good wine running riot in happiness all day. Before the fountain a poet, wine-imbued, telling the queen's graces, and the virtues of the wine. Cheapside's conduit ran white wine at one end, red at the other. Here's Master Walter, the city recorder, presenting the queen with a cunning purse holding a thousand marks of gold. Conduits running wine, pageants everywhere, till the brain dizzied at it all . . . . Ludgate burnished with gold and bice . . . . Westminster newly glazed, and hung with arras of gold . . . . A void of spice, comfits fit for a queen, solemnly handed to her here, with hippocras, and wines, which her majesty graciously sent down to her thirsty ladies . . . . So to retire, to attire herself, at Whitehall; then back to Westminster, for a night there with the king . . . .

Why, this is the dawn of coronation day! All of yesterday's marvels are nothing, to this day's resonant jubilation! The ray-cloth striped its way, from the dais in Westminster, through sanctuary and palace, up to very Westminster altar. All the chivalry of the world obeisant before her; the queen prone before Cranmer, who has left his wife at home while he performs his archepiscopal duties . . . . She rises, he anoints her head and breast; and on her head the crown of St. Edward is placed . . . . Glory to the English God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men, except of course to the emperor and the king, the Spanish queen, Sir Thomas More, and a thousand thousand others . . . . The elaborate coronation, every lord with his noble chore assigned . . . .

The king has given the whole stage to Anne today. His brow frowned; what would Clement say to all this? If only one of Catherine's sons had lived, there would have been no need of wedding this fading beauty . . . . In the end she had yielded, willy-nilly . . . .

July . . . . excommunication for the king and queen . . . . Pulpit after pulpit, in merrie England, vehemently shouting that the king was a polygamist . . . . At Greenwich, Friar Peto branding them to their faces with the curse of God, as on Ahab and Jezebel: "Your blood will be licked by dogs, royal adulterer!" Henry's cousin, cardinal Pole, writing Henry, naming Anne as Jezebel, sorceress, and what-not . . . .

God speed royal beddings!

CHAPTER XVII

A Royal Miscarriage

MEANWHILE, poor Catherine was not happy; and neither was the king's head gardener. Both drooped: the one, because she had been supplanted; the other, because the battata root had been eaten by a mole, and left no heir in its vegetable kingdom of England.

Lord Montjoy, her former page, came to Catherine, to announce that she was no longer queen, but merely dowager princess of Wales. Catherine lay on a sick-bed. She had pricked her foot with a pin, so that she could neither walk nor stand; and she was sore annoyed with a cough. She let Montjoy begin; then she cut him short. "I am no princess dowager, but the queen, and the king's true wife."

"Your majes— I mean, your highness—"

"I have been crowned and anointed queen, in God's and the world's eyes. I have had lawful issue by the king . . . ."

Threats from Montjoy, offer of vast bribes from him and his assistants . . . . None would move the former queen's heart.

"No. I have been queen, and not harlot, for twenty-five years; I am queen still."

She had the minutes of the conference brought to her, and with tear-blinded eyes and trembling hand she struck a pen through the offending title, "princess dowager," wherever it occurred. Her residence was transferred to Bugden, a place of the bishop of Lincoln, four miles from Huntingdon. Here one of her gentlewomen began cursing Anne Boleyn.

The queen dried her weeping eyes. "Hold your peace! Curse not—curse her not, but rather pray for her. For even now the hour comes fast, when you must pity her, and lament her case."

Prayer, alms, abstinence . . . . The very stones on which her head rested often wet, as though a shower had plagued them damp . . . . More envoys, to announce that she was queen no more; more insistence on her part, that she was queen forever.

Even Henry's ladies spoke so warmly in her favor, that the king incontinently sent two of them to the Tower . . . . One of these the lady Rochford, wedded to Anne's brother George. Elizabeth Barton, an epileptic nun of Kent, called the Holy Maid of Kent, vented her spleen, till Henry's hand fell on her; and some who had harkened to her, including Sir Thomas More, against whom no fault in office could be proven; but for this trumped up charge he was beheaded, and his head stuck upon London Bridge. Venerable Fisher was executed; England knew a rain of blood. Catherine's health failed; the heartless king ordered her to Fotheringay castle, noted for its bad air from the Nene; Kimbolton castle was substituted, with worse air, when Catherine refused to go to the first seat. Here she was taken. Her chaplain, Father John Forrest, was jailed among vagabonds: Abell, her other confessor, was jailed, both to undergo dreadful deaths, Forrest being burned while still living.

Close of the year, and the queen on her death-bed. Her last request, that she might see her daughter, Mary, before she died . . . . No, the bluff king retorted; if she would not recant her title of queen, let her die uncomforted.

A few days before her death, she wrote a pathetic letter to the king. He wept on reading it; but he did not relent. She died quietly on the night of January 2nd.

Four months before, on the 7th of September, 1533,

Anne gave birth to her child. She had been married publicly less than five months; she had been married, in secret, less than eight months. It would be a son, Henry decided that, and believed it passionately. He invited Francis to become sponsor for the little prince; the king agreed. It was determined that the boy should be named Henry or Edward. The circular, announcing the prince's birth, was prepared in advance, to all the nobility; the word "prince" was written in already.

Anne was delivered of a daughter.

Well, add an "s" to make "prince" into "princes" . . . . Name the little chit Elizabeth. England has no need for women; the most that can be done with her, is wed her to some royal foreigner . . . .

Parliament proceeded to entail the succession on her, in default of heirs male; and in turn it was required to swear fealty to the king and his heirs by Anne, which excluded Catherine's daughter Mary effectively.

Now to the Tower with More and Fisher. There was some amusement left in the world, even if one could not have a son at will.

Sir Thomas More's daughter, Margaret Roper, visited her father in his cell.

"How does Queen Anne?"

"In faith, father, never better. Dancing, sporting . . . . the whole court does nothing else."

"Never better! Alas, Meg, it pities me to think into what misery, poor soul, she will come shortly enough. These dances of hers will prove such dances, that she will spurn our heads off like footballs; she is Salome, and more. But ere long, her own head will dance the like dance."

The king sat at chess with Anne, when word was brought to him of the execution of More. He rose, something not quite hatred in his eyes. "You are the cause of this

man's death," he said; left the unended game; shut himself alone in his chamber . . . .

Rome had been busy, what with Clement ennobling his bastard, by a servant girl at an inn, whose favors he had shared with a muleteer, as grand duke of Florence; and squiring his fourteen-year-old niece, Catherine de Medici, into France—a girl already taught in the outre lore of sex, as thoroughly as Joanna of Naples had formerly been by women serving Clement the Sixth, long before that pontiff had bedded her. Now Catherine was being wedded to Henry, son of Francis of France. On his return to Rome, the pope was seized with violent pains in the stomach, of which he shortly died. Alexander Farnese, cardinal of Tusculum, bought up the voices of the sacred college, although publicly accused of incests with his daughter Constance; his sister Wilhelmina, whom he had once pandered to the Borgia pope; and even of supping three times each night, by inducing retching twice. A strange cleric, this Farnese, whom Mendoza accused of holding that Christ was none other than the sun, adored by the worshippers of Mithra, and indeed no other than Jupiter Ammon, the ram-god of Egypt. He made his bastard, Guy Ascanius Sforza, born of his amours with Constance, a cardinal; and did as much for fourteen-year-old Alexander Farnese, son of Peter Louis, the pope's bastard and minion.

Such a pope, Henry considered hopefully, might see virtue in this wedding with Anne. But no . . . . On August 30, 1535, the Holy Father thundered forth his anathema against Henry and Anne, provided they did not separate; pronounced their offspring illegitimate—he was an authority on this, this pope; and forbade Henry's servants to pay allegiance to their king. This drove Anne into the arms of the young Reformation, although she never forsook her belief in transubstantiation, the miracle of the transforma-

tion of the sacramental bread and wine into the veritable body and blood of the crucified Jesus, which all of His followers could enjoy, for the remission of their sins. Hardly a Protestant attitude . . . .

Henry still passively caressed the queen; but his heart was elsewhere. He saw her now, with the illusion of intrigue and stolen matings all gone. Things had not gone well with him and her . . . .

The English universities had declared in his favor; but it had taken threats and even violence, to wrest these decisions. Bologna, Padua, and Ferrara had announced in his favor: a pretty penny these had cost him: Germany had remained deaf to his pleas, as to his money; even the reformed church scoffed at the divorce. France . . . . the surrender of a claim of five hundred thousand crowns due by treaty, the present of a lily of diamonds given his father by Charles and Maximilian, and a loan of four hundred thousand crowns . . . . these had earned him the lip-support of Francis. But Clement had been adamant; and Paul, the new pope, was worse.

Cromwell had been the man for the moment . . . . It was at Cromwell's suggestion that Henry had thrown off the yoke of popish Rome, named himself the head of the church within his own realm, and had taken into his own royal hands all the powers and privileges of the pontiff. He had had his own clerkly training, with the see of Canterbury then as the heart's goal. This had gone overboard, at the demands of statecraft; but this move now meant, no only Anne, of whom he had already begun to tire, but power, and gold . . . .

Anne had whipped up his lagging passion, by promise of the first heir. And now, in the autumn of 1535, she was again with child. It must be a son, this time!

Cromwell was doing his best. Leigh and Ap Rice, two

of his creatures, had tricked all the English prelates into admission "that they derived no authority from Christ, but were merely occasional delegates of the crown." Henry had forced the Parliament to suppress the monastries, after bidding the lower house come before them, to receive his persuasive advice: "Pass the bill, or I will take off your heads!"

And now Anne had become annoying. Too much pondering of these matters, and she had grown grave and composed, instead of the wild hoyden he had first wooed and conquered . . . . No more of the roystering chase; only dull hours with her maids, at needlework or duller devotions . . . . Another Catherine! That vile reformer Latimer was no doubt at root of this; he had Anne's ear, solely. Yet she had her moments. The day of Catherine's funeral, he had bid her wear black, out of respect for the queenly dead; and the minx had blazed out in yellow, and had her maids do the same.

Well, she would have a son for him now, and all would be well. With Catherine's three dead princes, and, by common talk at least, Anne with one dead prince before Elizabeth was born, God had tried his patience enough. Gone were the rivalries of York and Lancaster; gone was the dour Spanish queen, God rest her soul and ease its torment; and now a Tudor prince for England, third of the name to lord it over Mary's dowry . . . .

Well, this called for a wild evening. Whom could he cosset? Not the ailing enciente queen; some maid at the court, perhaps, or even grosser stuff. There was that Mistress Jane Seymour, who had been in France with Nan; a buxom miss, with a roguish inviting eye, and breasts like miniver . . . .

Henry sought her out, in a hidden corner, and found her open to his words.

Her very kiss was intoxication. The sort of meat a king delighted to taste; viands for an emperor . . . . He pulled her over on his lap, and slid a hand down.

Mistress Jane squirmed happily on his lap, seeking to hush the clamor of his immediacy. "Not now, sire; this night, when the queen is abed . . . ."

"By God, I want you—now!"

She flung her arms around his gross neck. "What your majesty desires . . . ."

A stern, stiff, cold, agonized interruption from behind the pair of them. "What devil's work is this, Mistress Jane?"

It was Anne, the queen, standing beside the arras, hands clenched, body heaving.

Henry gently disengaged the maid's arms from around his neck. She replaced them there.

"And I with child for your highness . . . ." Anne swayed, and recovered.

"I was but answering a query, from this maiden . . . ."

Anne blazed her panting fury against the maid. "Have I not taught you decorum, mistress? You, a maid of honor to a queen!"

Jane's body burrowed more tightly against Henry's. "You have taught me well, madam. For you too were once maid of honor to a queen named Catherine, and I noted well how you behaved yourself with his royal majesty—then!"

Anne winced as if she had been lashed in the face. "You common alley bitch—"

Jane swung to her feet, angry womanhood shining from every inch of her. "You name yourself, when you speak of me. I did no more, to you, than you did, to Catherine. She is dead; and belike . . . ."

Anne turned in her wild fury, beating her clenched fists against the wall, squirming her body in hollow horrible

blows against the brickwork. "Oh, that it should come to this, that one of my maids dare beard me to my face, with Henry looking on, and not a word from him!"

He strode into the center of the room, patting Jane casually on her shoulder as he did so. "There is word from Henry. Go to your room; go on your knees, and pray your God to forgive you this unneeded slight on this virtuous maiden! We were but talking over the morrow's hunt . . . ."

"You lie, lie, lie, you gross thing! I saw your arms around her, her lips fast to yours . . . . I saw . . . . " She swayed again, swirled around, beat in anguish against the wall again.

"No way to treat his majesty's heir," said Jane, hard-heartedly.

Anne flashed over in front of her. "Oh, I'll kill you with my own hands, you devil's spawn! You temptress! You lewd whore, seeking to share what is mine, and mine alone! For this, I'll—"

Henry faced her, stout body stiffened with wrath, jaws aggressively pushed forward. "You have lost your reason, you froward thing! The maid has done no harm. Get you to your damned needlework and your dumb devotions, and for God's sweet sake let me have some peace and comfort in my aging years!"

Two swift arms snaked up, with one motion Anne ripped wide her headdress, and yanked out two great fistfulls of hair from her frenzied head. "Oh, I shall go mad, go mad! Here—in my own palace—to my face—the king dares to—" She staggered, struck against a chair, almost fell.

Henry, alarmed at last, was beside her at once. "Be at peace, sweetheart, and all will be well for you. I can explain . . . ."

"Explain! Oh, you gross ape . . . . How did you

dare," turning on the girl again, "how did you dare, in my own palace . . . ."

"And—in Catherine's palace?" said Mistress Jane, with sweet bitterness.

"Oh—" Her face grew purple with her choking ire.

"Sweetheart, compose yourself, by God's mercy, or you will . . . . I order you to . . . ."

In awed amazement the two of them watched her face, as it altered to a still more sinister mask of suffering. She clutched at her griping sides. "Ooooh! The pains . . . . I know them too well! Get me to my chamber . . . ."

Once on her bed, she would not give over writhing and screaming. The whole court guessed what had come to pass. Henry stood by, utter abhorrence on his face, seeking to command the frantic woman to calm herself, for the sake of her unborn son.

Agony, agony, agony . . . . writhing torment, with all the royal doctors suddenly summoned to tend their royal mistress . . . . Mistress Jane in the shadows, jubilant when Henry's eye was not on her, demurely regretful when he did see her, so that, taking pity on her, he assured her that only Anne's madness was responsible for this dreadful thing . . . .

Agony, agony, agony . . . . Hours of it, lingering on, while the queen's life at times was despaired of. And, in the end, her body vented its wrenched burden, and she bore a dead son.

Henry had gone forth, unable to stomach more of this, when word came to him, as he stood beside Mistress Jane, his hands caressing her body, though his mind were blank. Like a walking thunder cloud he strode into Anne's apartment. "So! You have done it. My boy—my son—is dead, of your doing!"

Even out of her agony, Anne had spirit enough to reply, "You have no one to blame but yourself, sire, for this disappointment. Naught but my distress of mind about that wench, Jane Seymour . . . ."

"You—Anne Boleyn—dare speak of wenches! By God, madam, you will get no more sons from me!"

He went, and with his going the sun passed from Anne Boleyn forever.

JANE SEYMOUR

1536

From the painting by Holbein, in the Belvedere Gallery, at Vienna

CHAPTER XVIII

Girls Will Be Wenches

THE miscarriage took place in January, 1536. Anne slowly grew back to health; but the sunshine had departed from her face, and all behind it. She knew Henry the rutting bull; she knew that her star had waned forever. This new star, Mistress Jane . . . .

For hours she would sit in the quadrangle court at Greenwich palace, unspeaking, meditating, with no companions but her little dogs, and no sport but to set them to tearing one another to pieces. The king had withdrawn himself; he met her no more in private. There were the smiles of the little princess Elizabeth; but these were not for her consolation, since the princess was being reared apart. Her uncle of Norfolk had grown to hate her; Mary, the king's sister, her confidant, was dead, and Suffolk, Mary's husband, was one of her bitterest foes.

Henry had discovered some odd intrigue with the court of her old admirer, Francis, the year before, on an occasion in which the French ambassador, Gontier, was in private conference with Anne for more than an hour, while the fretting English king waited for her. She had told Gontier that Francis must devise some explanation for this, or that she was altogether lost and ruined. All inexplicable . . . . Surely Anne was not conducting a secret liaison with France, under the very eyes of Henry and his courtiers, too ready to strike at the reigning favorite, in the hope of better fortune with the next!

She had ever been a coquette, with any man; this weighed heavily against her now. She invited the addresses

of men, even of the low-born. Thus the musician, Mark Smeaton, dared openly insinuate his love for her. This came to the king at once. Three gentlemen of the royal household, Brereton, Weston, and Norris, were also named as being on terms of intimate raillery, or worse, with the queen.

"They are her lovers already," hissed rumor, in the king's ear.

"Would God it were so! I have grown sick of her stale beauty."

Lady Rochford, sister-in-law of Anne, married to the queen's brother George, came to Henry with a more unnatural story. There was affection between brother and sister, God knows; but Anne's few defenders insisted that it was no more than natural affection.

Lady Rochford sought the king's ear, and spoke thus and so. It was enough. Henry's eyes glistened as he learned what details the trouble-maker could give him. "The foul wench! I'll have her head, for this . . . ."

April 4, 1536, Parliament was dissolved. The writs for the new Parliament, to meet June 8th, were issued April 27th, after the papers for her arrest had been prepared, but before they were served. Three days before that date, a secret committee was appointed of the privy council, to inquire into the charges against her. Among the commissioners were her uncle, the duke of Norfolk; Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk; the lord chancellor; several earls; several judges; and her father, earl of Wiltshire and Ormond.

On Thursday, April 28th, William Brereton was summoned, examined, and committed to the Tower. Two days afterwards, the queen, all unaware of what was being devised against her, came upon Mark Smeaton, the musician, standing in the round window of her presence-chamber, in doleful mood.

"Why are you so sad, Mark?"

"It is no matter."

She bridled a bit at his tone. "You may not look to have me to speak to you as if you were a nobleman; you are an inferior person."

"No, no, madam," he retorted. "With your majesty, a look is as eloquent as a word could be."

Her vanity, which led to her assuming a hopeless passion on his part for her, or, at least, a passion, quieted the words of warning that were ready on his lips. He had learned of the arrest of Brereton.

The next day the wretched musician was arrested, and, loaded with irons, was sent to the Tower.

On Monday, May 1st, Anne Boleyn appeared for the last time in the pomp of royalty, beside her consort, above the lists at Greenwich. Her brother, Viscount Rochford, was the principal challenger; Henry Norris, one of the gentlemen of her chamber, was one of the defenders.

The queen, either by accident or design, dropped her handkerchief from the balcony at the feet of Norris. The favored knight, heated with the course, lifted it, wiped his face with it, and, on the point of his lance, handed it up to the queen.

Henry changed color, started from his seat, and, attended by six of his followers, left the balcony without a word to the startled queen.

The queen presently retired. The sports were abruptly ended; Lord Rochford and Norris were arrested at the barrier on the charge of high treason; Sir Francis Weston was taken into custody at the same time. These, with Brereton and Smeaton . . . . Five luckless gentlemen, whose quick departure would ease the king's will toward the ending of Anne.

Norris rode back with Henry. The king earnestly begged him to acknowledge his guilt; for Norris had always

stood high in the king's favor. No; Norris maintained his innocence stoutly, and the innocence of the queen; he would not aid in compassing her ruin.

The arrest of her brother and his friends chilled the heart of Anne. Until the next day, she did not guess at the charge against them. She supped alone, with no greeting from the king: an unwonted omission. Her ladies stared at her with stony eyes; but the eyes of the servants held tears. As the surnap, or over-tablecloth, was being removed, in entered Norfolk, Audley, Cromwell, and others of the council. Behind them stood Sir William Kingston, lieutenant of the Tower.

At sight of his forbidding face, Anne started up in terror. "Why have you come thus to me?"

"We come, by his majesty's command, to conduct you to the Tower, there to abide during his highness' pleasure."

"If it is his pleasure, I am ready to obey," spoken firmly at last. So to her barge, with this menacing escort. Once on it, the council cross-questioned her relentlessly, her uncle Norfolk excelling in the cruel vigor of his examination.

"You are a proven whore, Anne," he said crassly. "Your paramours have admitted their guilt."

"Oh, no, no! I am innocent—no one can have confessed . . . ."

"They have admitted it." Words with the finality of doom.

Anne started up beseechingly. "I must see his majesty, to plead my cause in person to him!"

Norfolk pished scornfully at her. "He has no time to waste on proven wantons!"

Below the frowning arch of the Tower, she sank on her knees, hands uplifted despairingly to heaven. "Oh Lord, help me, as I am guiltless of all whereof I am accused!"

She turned to Kingston: "Do I go into a dungeon?"

"No, madam; to your own lodging, where you lay at your coronation."

This brought back too much happiness, too much unbridled triumph, all dead now. Tears leapt forth without bidding. "It is too good a fate for me! Jesus, have mercy upon me!"

Suddenly her hysterical weeping altered to a more hysterical laughter. She looked wildly about her, and cried out in mad merriment to the jailer, "But why am I here, Master Kingston?"

The clock tolled five as they entered . . . . She begged Kingston to ask the king to let her have sacrament in her closet, that she might pray for mercy . . . . "But I have never wronged the king; tell him that, good Master Kingston, I pray you!" And again, "I am the king's true wedded wife. Do you know whereof I am here, Master Kingston?"

"Nay, not I."

She besought him still. "When did you see his majesty last?"

"Not since I saw him in the tilt-yard."

"Mr. Kingston," she fixed a strange look upon him, "I pray you tell me where my Lord Rochford is?"

"I saw him before dinner, in the court."

"My sweet brother! Oh, where is he?"

Kingston evaded answering her directly.

"I hear," said Anne wearily, "that I shall be accused with three men, and I can say no more than— Nay. Oh, Norris, why did you accuse me? You are in the Tower, and you and I shall die together; and Mark, you are here too! Oh, my mother, you will die of this sorrow!" She started weeping, then spoke again. "Master Kingston, shall I die without justice?"

"The poorest subject of the king has that."

She laughed again: a laugh of bitter incredulity. She knew—she had been a part of—Henry's red justice.

Her great enemy, Lady Boleyn, and Mrs. Cosyns, one of her ladies who was especially disagreeable to her, were put into her chamber, to harass and annoy her. Neither by night or day did they leave her side; they slept on the pallet at the foot of her bed, and told to the king even the delirious ravings of her hysterical paroxysms. Lady Boleyn was the wife of Anne's uncle, Sir Edward Boleyn; her family was vindictive against her. Hour after hour their insolence continued; they probed her with unintermittent questioning, seeking to snarl her in her own talk.

"Tell me this," Mrs. Cosyns tested out. "Why did Norris tell your almoner, on Saturday last, that he could swear that the queen was a good woman?"

"I told him to do it," said Anne, retorting back furiously. "I asked him why he did not go on with this marriage; when he said he would tarry awhile, I rallied him, 'Then you look for a dead man's shoes; if aught but good should come to the king,' whose ulcer plagued him greatly then, 'you would look to have me.' He said it was not so. I said, 'I could undo Henry, if I would'; and with this we quit talking."

Well, let the judges make the most of it . . . . The queen bandying so intimately with a courtier, that she challenged him that he sought to marry her; and suggested to him that she herself could destroy the sick king . . . .

"Who has made the beds of the poor gentlemen?" thoughtlessly Anne queried of Lady Kingston.

"No one, I warrant you."

"Poor men. Ballads will be made about me," said Anne, wistfully. "None could do that better than Wyatt."

The king sent, not her almoner Devett, but his thing, Cranmer, to receive her confession. All day she veered from

this mad mood to that. One moment she prayed to die; the next hour, she squirmed aloud her desire to live.

"I was cruelly handled at Greenwich, by my lord of Norfolk," she said to Cranmer. "As for my lord treasurer, my father, he was in Windsor Forest all day."

Cromwell reported much that she had said to her female inquisitors. "The queen is troubled over what Weston may say," he reported. "He told her on Whit-Monday last that Norris came more into her chamber for her sake, than for Madge, one of her maids." Cromwell added a postscript: "The queen spoke again of Weston, saying that she had told him that he loved her kinswoman, Mistress Skelton, and not his wife; and that he had answered her, 'I love one in this house better than them both.' The queen asked him, 'Who?' 'Yourself,' he answered shortly; at which, she says, she defied him."

At times she was full of a pathetic cheerfulness. "Harry will not harm me; he but does this to test me . . . . I tell you," face suddenly maddened, "there will be no rain in England, until I am bid loose from this thraldom."

She wrote pleadingly to the king, protesting her full innocence; and desiring, that, if any suffer from his displeasure, she alone bear its weight, and the poor gentlemen falsely accused be released. The letter was signed "Anne Bullen," not "Anne the queen," as if to remind the king of her whom he had once loved and sought so . . . . Time has a way of gelding many things . . . .

The grand jury at Westminster found an indictment for high treason on May 10th, against all six of them. The commoners were tried first. Smeaton tried to save his life, by pleading guilty. He had admitted, before the council, the truth of the charge involving him and Anne: she had been his lover, he said, no doubt of that. The three gentle-

men persisted in their pleas of innocence. The evidence came in, and all were condemned to death.

It was whispered that Mark Smeaton had been grievously racked, before he would confess . . . . It was whispered that the admiral, Sir William Fitzwilliam, had subtly promised that, if he would sign his confession, "he would see what would come of it." He was hanged; no more tales from him . . . .

Norris was offered his life, if he would confess.

"I would sooner die a thousand deaths, than accuse the queen of what I believe her, in my conscience, to be innocent of."

This was reported to Henry. "One death will do well enough for him," he said sourly. "Hang him up, hang him up!"

On May 16th, Anne and her brother were brought to trial, in a great hall hied up for that purpose within sight of the Tower. Twenty-six out of the fifty-three peers of England were named by the king as "lords triers," under Norfolk, created lord high steward for the occasion. His son, the earl of Surrey, sat under him as deputy earl marshal. Anne's father, Wiltshire, was not among these judges. Suffolk was; so was Henry's natural son, the duke of Richmond. Anne's first lover, Percy, now earl of Northumberland, was named on the commission; but when he appeared, he was suddenly taken ill, and quitted the court before the first culprit was arraigned. Within a few months, he himself died.

Lady Rochford appeared as witness against her husband. She swore that her husband, when making some request of his sister the queen, had leaned over the bed, and had kissed her . . . .

Rochford defended himself eloquently. He was found guilty.

Anne was summoned: she had all her dignity with her at last. "Not guilty," she pleaded simply. One of the maids of the court had excused charges against herself, by saying that the queen constantly admitted Norris, Weston, Brereton, Smeaton, and her brother, into her chamber at improper hours. "Smeaton could tell a great deal more," this maid's testimony ended.

The charge was that Anne had taken the four men, and her brother as her lovers; that she had told each, separately, that the king had never had her heart; and, to each, that she loved him better than any person in the world . . . . This was held to slander her issue by the king. There was also a charge of conspiring against the king's life; perhaps grounded on her confessed words to one of the men, that she could undo the king, if she would; perhaps on other evidence. She spoke well, in her own defense . . . .

But Suffolk had the king's ear, and he spoke for his master. The verdict was guilty. She was required to lay aside her crown and other insignia of royalty. She did, quietly enough, still protesting her innocence.

After this, Norfolk, lord high steward of England and president of the commissioned court, pronounced sentence. She was to be burnt or beheaded, at the king's pleasure.

Anne turned, after appealing to God, to her judges. "My lords, I will not say that your sentence is unjust . . . . I have ever been a faithful wife to the king. I confess I have had jealous fancies and suspicions of him, which I had not discretion and wisdom enough to conceal at all times. But God knows, and is my witness, that I never sinned against him any other way."

A dumb witness. He was not listed as appearing at the trial.

A word she said for the others condemned. "Since I see it so pleases the king, I shall willingly accompany them in

death, with this assurance, that I shall lead an endless life with them in peace."

Cranmer was sent to receive her last confession. This visit gave her hope; she spoke, a bit distrait, of being banished to Antwerp . . . .

She was summoned to appear, May 17th, to answer certain questions as to the validity of her marriage to the king. Her named representatives admitted the pre-contract with Percy, and the king's other objections against the marriage. Some whispered that Anne submitted to all this, to avoid the dread death by burning.

Cranmer announced that the marriage between Henry and Anne was null and void, and always had been so. Thus Henry used the very marriage he had prevented, out of his jealous lust, as a means of annulling his own marriage with Anne, and bastardizing his child by her. Nor would Henry let her out of the death sentence, by this act; it was blood that he sought. Had she not, in her wilful temper, caused to die his expected heir by her?

That same morning her brother and the other gentlemen were executed, a scaffold having been set up for that end on Tower Hill. Rochford went quietly and soberly to death, saying no words in his own exoneration or the queen's, as to the thing of which they were accused conjointly. Norris, Weston, Brereton, made general acknowledgements of sinfulness, using almost Rochford's own words: "As a sinner, I bewail my unworthiness, and acknowledge the justice of my punishment in the sight of God." But the king he said, he had never offended . . . .

The wife and the mother of Weston offered to purchase his life for a hundred thousand crowns.

No: Henry was out for blood.

Mark Smeaton, being of ignoble birth, was hanged. He spoke: "Masters, I pray you all to pray for me, for I have

deserved the death." By committing the crime alleged? By bearing false witness against the queen? Some held to the one view, some to the other.

When Anne heard of this, she was indignant. "Has he not then cleared me from the public shame he has done me? Alas! I fear his soul will suffer from the false witness he has borne."

The final words of doom came to her; she sat down composedly, to write her own dirge:

Oh, death, rock me asleep,
Bring on my quiet rest,
Let pass my very guiltless ghost
Out of my careful breast.
Ring out the doleful knell,
Let its sound my death tell;
For I must die,
There is no remedy,
For now I die! . . . .

Farewell my pleasures past,
Welcome my present pain,
I feel my torments so increase
That life cannot remain.
Sound now the passing bell,
Rung is my doleful knell,
For its sound my death doth tell.
Death doth draw nigh,
Sound the knell dolefully,
For now I die!

The execution was set for the 19th of May; and Henry ordered it to be by beheading, on the green within the Tower. Anne begged forgiveness of Lady Kingston, for the wrongs she had done her. This lady, and all England, faced with startled eyes what was due. Never before had female blood been shed on English scaffold; the wild Normans, the merciless Plantagenets, had never butchered women . . . . There was talk of a rescue. This much the king did: he de-

creed that she should die by the sword, after the French fashion; and for this end the headsman of Calais, a man especially expert in his bloody calling, was summoned over.

Anne summoned Kingston. "I hear I shall not die before noon, Master Kingston; I am sorry for that, for I thought to be dead by this time, and past my pain."

"The pain will be little, it is so subtle."

"I have heard that the executioner is very good at his trade; and I have a little neck." She put her hands about it, laughing heartily.

A few minutes before the appointed noon hour, which had not been communicated to the people, the doors were thrown open, and Anne came forth, in a robe of black damask, with a deep white cape falling over it on her neck. She had a fearful beauty, what with the fear and the thrill of the moment. Kingston aided her up to the platform; here were Richmond, and Suffolk, and many more, come to watch her blood . . . .

And there was Cromwell, his son and heir married to the sister of Jane Seymour.

Anne is speaking: "Good Christian people, I am come hither to die, according to law, for by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that whereof I am accused . . . . I pray God to save the king, and send him long to reign over you, for a gentler or more merciful prince there never was. To me he was ever a good and gentle sovereign lord . . . . I heartily desire you all to pray for me."

Anne would not have her eyes covered. Her brilliant black gaze disarmed the executioner, until, taking off his shoes, he beckoned an assistant to advance on one side as he softly approached on the other. When the queen turned her head, at the sound of these steps, he struck off her head with one blow of his sword.

CHAPTER XIX

The Dumb Queen

A SHORT distance from Tottenham Park, Wiltshire, lay Wolf Hall, inherited by Sir John Seymour from his grandmother, the heiress of Esturmy. The St. Maurs—who altered to Seymours—were Monmouthshire folk, from Woundy: harsh British Marchmen, who kept the marauding Welsh impaled. To Wolf Hall the queen's successfully presuming maid of honor had retired, while the bloody black drama came to its severing curtain on Tower Hill.

On the morning of May 19th, a tall huntsman tarried among his attendants and leashed hounds in the oaked fringe of one of the royal hunting-grounds, Epping Forest perhaps, though some hold it was Richmond Park. The slow morning hours dawdled by, while the royal sportsman fumed and smoked at the delay. Noon came; and from Tower Hill the sullen boom of the death-gun shuddered along winding Thames.

Henry started with decorous joy. He was ever a man for the proprieties, and it would not have looked well for him to be on a fresh chase until the earlier quarry lay dead. "Ha!" he hallooed his satisfaction. "That's done at last! The hounds—uncouple 'em, and away!" The sound of the horns—the spurring councillors beside their eager master . . . . The queen is dead; what to do, but rush to cringe before tomorrow's reigning favorite!

On Tower Hill, there were a few left to do honor to the bleeding dust. One weeping lady lifted the severed queenly head, the rest the bleeding body; what man had put asunder

women joined together, reverentially covered with a sheet, and laid in an old elm chest, which was carried into the church within the Tower. There, beside the bodies of the other victims, the dead queen was laid away: so the people were told. There was neither singing nor ceremonial for her, no chapel ardente or midnight requiem . . . . But, under mask of night, there was gold that passed into the trembling hands of the porter and the sextons; there was an old elm chest, holding the beloved dust, borne through the narrow dark streets out Aldgate portal of the city, on the sunrise road.

The old church of Horndon-on-the-Hill, in Essex, holds an unnamed black marble monument. Beneath it, whisper the wise men, was laid all that was left of the loved lady. Percy followed her to the grave in a few months; the faithful Wyatt survived her only four years. Jane Seymour . . . .

Mistress Jane was of an age with Anne Boleyn. The year of birth of both of these queens was uncertain; it was nearer 1501 than 1507, and there is a chance that Jane was the elder. As Henry rode westward to greet her, he reflected that, for all of his labors with the heralds as to her high descent, she would undeniably bring him a brother-in-law named Smith, and another whose grandfather was a blacksmith at Putney. The heralds had trumped up an imposing pedigree for the new royal bitch, through Hotspur and Lady Elizabeth Mortimer, herself from Lionel, duke of Clarence. Handy Cranmer had granted a dispensation for nearness of kin between the king and the lady, although at best they were beyond fourth cousinship. But the brother-in-laws were not to be explained away . . . .

A bloody road the king had travelled, since Mistress Anne bowed and flirted her way into royal favor. The Carthusians, the Brigittins, the Franciscans had defied the

altered church; half a hundred of them had died bleakly in prison. The priors of the charter houses of London, Axiholm, and Belleval, with four monks and a secular clergyman, had been hanged, cut down while yet living, disembowelled, dismembered, beheaded. The bed of a king must be smoothed by such little incidents . . . .

Well, Cranmer had done his chore well again. The marriage with Anne had been sponged out, as null, void, of no effect; the issue of Anne were bastardized, as Catherine's had been; parliament would enact the succession to the heirs of the body of Jane Seymour, with a clause granting the king the power to limit the succession to one named under his own great seal, or by will, to any person or persons of his own choosing. Thus, if Jane was tardy in furnishing heirs male, there was always the duke of Richmond, his natural son by Elizabeth Taillebois. Oh, the boy was a man already: why not damn this easy maid, and name Richmond at once?

The stag turned north; but the royal chase bore ever westward. By night, most of the councillors had given over the mad ride; but giant Henry, for all of his grossening frame, lasted the ride through. Night . . . . Wolf Hall . . . . "It is done at last, my adored one," in Jane's ear . . . . Feasting, drinking, and play thereafter. And Jane's hard eyes glittering at what she had done. Yes, she had done it all: but for her, Anne would now have a son of the blood royal to rule over England. Shrewd little vixen, who knew how to play on another woman's jealousy as a maid played upon the virginals, until death to the unborn was the macabre melody it uttered . . . .

Morning . . . . Henry in white, yesterday forgotten . . . . white for his wedding with another queen. Saturday, the 20th of May, 1536, was the date of the marriage of the monarch and the shrewd maid of honor. The next day was

Rogation Sunday, and if all was not done before then, it would have to be postponed until the days of preparation for the Whitsun festival were ended. What? Waste a space of permitted tumbling, when the maid could be bedded in sight of the world before the holy days commenced?

Henry did not whisper to the intended queen that Richmond was to be named heir of England . . . . Let tomorrow see that . . . .

In the parish church of Tottingham parish, Wiltshire, the words were spoken. Sir John Russell whispered aside to a courtier, "It is a lie that his majesty grows gross. He is the goodliest person under this roof. As for Mistress Jane, she is by all odds the fairest queen my eyes have seen. Dress up Anne, and she grew a frump; dress up Jane, and she is an angel."

So to Marwell, near Winchester, an episcopal country-seat, for the night. So to Winchester, and London. On the 29th of May the new queen was formally introduced, and the marriage festivities were wedded to the Whitsuntide rejoicings. Henry brought his bride to Mercer's Hall in person, to let her stand in one of the wide windows and view the annual setting the city watch on St. Peter's eve, the 29th of June . . . .

Parliament meeting . . . . Lord Chancellor Audley speaking at such tiresome length, that the clerks gave up the transcription in despair . . . . Speaker Richard Rich talking of the king: "a Samson for fortitude and strength, a Solomon for justice and prudence, an Absolom for beauty and comeliness . . . ."

Coverdale's Bible, printed in Zurich, referred to Henry and his queen, Anne . . . . After printing, before publication, the queens were shifted. Well, print a "J" above the former queen's name, and let it go at that . . . .

And then Richmond died . . . . Henry took this body

blow, and watched with attentive eyes the progress of Mistress Jane's pregnancy.

One, and one only, public act of Jane's is recorded—an order to the park-keeper at Havering atte Bower, to deliver to her beloved gentlemen of the king's chapel royal two bucks. It was whispered that she had negotiated the king's reconciliation with Mary, his daughter by Catherine, who was readmitted to royal favor on her confessing that Henry was the supreme head of the church, and admitting that the marriage of her mother to Henry was incestuous and unlawful.

Autumn brought a dreadful insurrection in the north . . . . starving people and famished monks . . . . The whole North was inflamed; Shrewsbury and Norfolk, the king's lieutenants, thought it politic to conciliate rather than to fight. The rebels laid down their arms, on promise of a free pardon for all, and a speedy Parliament, to hear and adjust grievances. The moment they were at peace, Henry broke his word; and this second time Norfolk was equipped to end them by force. Lord d'Arcy and Robert Ashe, the leaders, were given the dignity of an execution in London; hundreds more dangled in the winds at York and Carlisle; and, when enough blood had been let, the Solomon's mercy granted a pardon to the miserable remainder.

The smaller monasteries had already been confiscated; this rebellion and its crushing gave an opportunity to end and take over into royal hands Furness, Whalley, Botton, Lanercost, Jovraulx, Fountains, and the other great northern abbeys.

In the royal palaces, Queen Jane remained dumb. Catherine and Anne had spoken too much; from them she learned to say nothing, and to see nothing. Henry's queens were numerous; his women were beyond numbering. Chance after chance was offered her, in court, to polish off some

presumptuous maid or envious courtier by a rapier flash of wit. No: for such things queens had died. She emulated the great lion-bodied man at Memphis, the Sphinx, and spoke no word that might be remembered.

"Which would you prefer?" Henry would demand, as to two pieces of silk, or two proposed journeyings, or two men, one of whom was to be beheaded, and the other spared.

"As your majesty wills". No parrot could have said it more endlessly . . . .

There were other women in the court, Henry reflected with satisfaction. And Jane had no eyes but closed ones, when he was in heat and found another to cosset . . . .

January of 1537 . . . . severe and withering cold . . . . Even Thames was frozen. And over it rode Henry and his queen, Jane, attended by their whole court. Soon thereafter he would not have permitted her to expose herself thus. Parliament, in vesting the succession in her heirs, had obsequiously and observingly remarked, "Whose age and fine form give promise of issue." And now the hoped for had become the expected. Jane was with child; perhaps with male child—if so, the fifth or sixth time that queen of his had been with male child, though he had still no heir to the throne.

In the summer, a gentle progress to Canterbury. But the purpose was not gentle. Others had cantered down to the graceful seat, to pay tribute to the buried bones of the saintly martyr, Thomas à Becket. Henry was busying himself, on his sabbatical days away from women, with reforming abuses and abolishing shrines. Here was the shrine at Canterbury . . . . here was the long-buried abuse of the dead martyr's aversion from his king. Second Henry had elevated Becket, a mere deacon, although chancellor, to the see of Canterbury. He had always found Becket a syco-

phantic supporter; and expected as much from him as archbishop. Becket had turned on his royal master, in the name of the church; had flouted the royal power repeatedly, and, in the end, had dubbed the royal Constitutions of Clarendon, defining the relations of church and court, as null and void. For this the swift assassination, and the canonization within two years . . . .

Henry the second Tudor king sniffed treason to royal power in this, for all that it was three and a half centuries buried.

"Bring Thomas à Becket into court, to answer to me for sedition against his royal master, Henry II," ordered Henry the Eighth curtly.

His councillors were aghast. "The saint is dead and long entombed."

"He is guilty of sedition. Shall I, whom you call a Solomon for justice, let the guilty go scot free in my realm?"

"Sire, bethink yourself. The man is dead already! He belongs to another realm than yours."

Henry rolled his fat body back upon his chair, to ease the discomfort of sitting, and pounded with a great fat fist against the table. "In the time of fourth Innocent, almost three centuries ago, it was the wont to try the dead for their heresies and crimes. Torquemada, and Eymeric before him, did this in Spain. When the dead were convicted, their bones were dug up and fed to the flames. Strawmen were drawn from the tombs, and in their straw ears the tablet of alleged crimes was read aloud; and in the end these strawmen were committed to the flames, and their goods confiscated. There is wealth in the shrine of this Thomas Becket . . . ."

"But, sire—"

Henry snarled on, "At Zaragoza, a Jewish son was compelled by the Holy Office to burn the remains of his father. More than this, did not Pope Stephen the Seventh

have the dead body of Pope Formosus exhumed, robed, tiaraed, and tried by the Latin bishops for usurping the see of Peter? When he had been held guilty, Stephen himself excommunicated the tiaraed corpse, and with a great blow of his fist sent the cadaver rolling to the ground. He himself despoiled it of the sacred garments, cut off three fingers from the right hand, had the head struck off, and the dead torso flung into Tiber flood. Can I do not as much against my seditious English bishop?"

The courtiers listened, unable to protest further.

"Moreover, the good cardinal Hyacinth, when he was elevated as Pope Celestin III, took the body of the Norman Tancred, king of Sicily, straight from the tomb, and, after condemnation, had it beheaded: and Tancred's living son he blinded with a hot iron, and in his presence had the youth's male organs torn off his shrieking body. Good thing for this Becket that he has no son, to meet my displeasure!"

"It—it is a good thing," chorused the courtiers.

"Bring Thomas à Becket into court before me. Have him summoned by the court crier, at once!"

Solemnly the name of the accused was pronounced.

There was no answer from the dumb tomb.

"Give the accused thirty days to make his appearance in person, or by proxy. At the end of that time . . . ."

Heaven, the wise men explained, was at least a thirty days journey from England, at any rate while Henry was its king.

The thirty days elapsed. Thomas à Becket took singularly little interest in the proceedings, dead and interred as he was. He did not show up in person, nor by proxy.

Solemnly the court, at Henry's bidding, named him seditionist; ordered that his bones be burned; and that all his wordly goods be forfeited to the grasping crown.

And so the jewels and wealth, given by the pilgrimaging

hordes of Christendom for three hundred years, to the shrine of the dead saint, were turned into the royal coffers. Thereafter Henry wore always, as a thumb ring, the magnificent diamond presented to the murdered seditionist by King Louis VII, and known to the myriad pilgrims for years as The Lustre of France.

And now the time drew near when the heir was to come, and Jane went to her royal chamber, to stay there the month before the heir was born. No fresh air, no exercise . . . . But, in God's name, give Harry's England a son, to rule after him!

CHAPTER XX

A Son Is Born

IT was at this time that Master Holbein was commissioned to sketch the queen—a most ill-starred period, as far as her beauty was concerned. There were those who spoke well of her beauty, even in comparison with the sparkle of Anne and the stateliness of Catherine. Look at the sketch, hanging in her majesty's collection at Windsor . . . . A gross, cow-like woman, large-faced, small-featured, like sparse hen-scratches on a smoothed poultry-yard. The eyes are blue and sinister . . . . they have seen a queen rage herself into a miscarriage, and the subsequent scaffold. The mouth is small, but large enough to suck queenship from Henry's lips. The lips are thin and compressed: a queen's life is no heaven. The eyebrows are faint, the cheek-bones high, the point of the nose thick . . . . a wornout hussy. But any fare is good for a change; and the shrewd mistress had known how to shop her charms to advantage. Who beds a woman for her face, at that? Let it blare out the skimpiness of soul, if it must . . . . in the darkness, there are other delights.

And here is Henry himself, the great Holbein painting . . . . a king, if there ever was one. His great arms are akimbo, his shoulders nudge the edges of the firmament. Jewelled glory of the world in his robes, and his face . . . .

The eyebrows are not quite symmetrical. The left one lifts toward the zenith, towards which the low plumed hat also aims. The eyes are level, direct, tremendous: power, power, power, steelly shining out of them. The nose is

gross, but shapely; it marks a good liver, a woman seeker, a connoisseur in exquisite sadisms. The moustache curves downward Tartar fashion; the beard is clipped but ample. And the mouth! It is a cupid's bow; but it is large—large enough to sample the lips and the bodies of the wenches of Christendom. Power . . . . bull necked, heavy set, already fattening into grossness, but a man whose thumb outweighs the cross of Rome and the men and women of his time.

The month drew to its close. Since the 16th of September, 1537, Jane had been confined to her chamber. On the 12th of October, the pangs began. An agony—a martyrdom—hour after hour. All the physicians of the court in attendance; Henry, even the casual busses of the court trulls not enough to pull his mind away from that chamber of pain, treading with heavy anxiety through the carpeted halls outside the lying-in chamber.

The timorous doctors approach him.

"How goes it?"

"Ill, sire; ill. Both of them, belike, are like to die."

Henry's power flashing out of distended eyes. "That must not be. I must have that son alive!"

"Sire," the eldest doctor speaking as softly as a cat's tread, "one may be saved: your wife, or the child. Which will you have it be?"

In amazement the king swung upon the doctor's slight frame. "By God, save me that child alive! As for the wife, other wives can be found easily enough."

They had it in a ballad, before the pains were hardly ended. Thomas Churchyard's touch it is; Skelton has gone, and this is the new idol.

> Whenas King Henry ruled this land,
> He had a queen, I understand,
> Lord Seymour's daughter, fair and bright;

Yet death, by his remorseless power,
Did blast the bloom of this fair flower.
O mourn, mourn, mourn, fair ladies,
Your queen, the flower of England, 's dead.

The queen in travail pain-ed sore,
Full thirty woeful hours and more;

"Ay, it was thirty," muttered the king, as the ballad was being crooned to him.

And no ways could reliev-ed be,
As all her ladies wished to see;
Wherefore the king made greater moan
Than ever yet his grace had done . . . .

Being thus perplexed with grief and care,
A lady to him did repair,
And said, "O king, show us thy will,
The queen's sweet life to save, or spill?"

"It was the physician, and no lady. But no matter; it is a goodly song."

"Then, as she cannot sav-ed be,
O save the flower, though not the tree."
O mourn, mourn, mourn, fair ladies,
Your queen, the flower of England, 's dead.

Friday, October 12th, the vigil of St. Edward's day . . . . The child is delivered! Henry, mad with anxious interest, stormed the inner door, once word leaked out that a child had been born.

"Living?" he gasped.

"Ay, sire; and a son."

"God in his glory be praised!" Hands wildly upflung above the fat body toward heaven, great gross face wreathed into a grimacing mask of ugly joy.

"The queen, sire—"

"What care I for the queen? England has a son, at last!"

Latimer even felt the sudden mad delirium of rejoicing. His letter to the council and Cromwell broke off midway, "But what a great fool am I!" England was all a great fool, from the king down to the chimney-sweep's doxy.

Now for the procession of triumph. It must begin in Queen Jane's very lying-in chamber; nay, the sickly queen herself, body strained and tortured by the living hell of spewing forth this royal whelp,—she must have her part. She must be removed, for the christening, from her royal bed to a state pallet, with the gold thread crown and arms of England at its back, with two long pillows and two square ones, a counterpane of scarlet cloth lined with ermine, with propping cushions of crimson damask and gold . . . .

Midnight, in the chapel of Hampton Court, the christening . . . . Here's the baby princess, Elizabeth, borne in the queen's brother's arms; the little girl herself, carrying the chrism, the baptismal robe . . . . Here is Wiltshire, murdered Anne Boleyn's father, a towel around his neck, bearing a taper of virgin wax, smiling and smirking for the royal favor. By God, he'd given two wives and two daughters to this king; he was entitled to win a share of royal favor! Princess Mary beside Cranmer and Norfolk, the sponsors . . . . Sir John Russell, Sir Nicholas Carew, Sir Francis Brian, Sir Anthony Brown, in aprons, with towels about their necks, guarding the font of solid silver. The marchioness of Exeter has the princely child under a canopy, upheld by Suffolk, Exeter, Arundel, Lord William Howard. Mother Jack, or Mistress Jackson, the infant's nurse, near her charge, followed by the midwife and the queen's domestics . . . .

Te Deum rolling out in jubilation . . . . Lord William Howard hands the towel to the princess Mary; Lord Fitzwalter bears the covered basins; Lord Delawar uncovers them; Lord Stourton hands the towels to Cranmer and Norfolk. Baptism over, Garter is speaking solemnly: "God, in his almighty and infinite grace, grant good life and long, to the right high, right excellent, and noble prince Edward, duke of Cornwall and earl of Chester, most dear and entirely-beloved son of our most dread and gracious lord Henry VIII."

Cornwall as soon as he first hiccuped; Chester before he bawled first . . . .

The lady Mary gave her godson a cup of gold, by Lord Essex; Cranmer gave him three great bowls and two great pots, borne by the father of Anne Boleyn; Norfolk made a similar offering. Princess Elizabeth, on the return, was led away by her sister Mary . . . . Elizabeth, four years old, already with a train, borne by Lady Herbert, sister of one Catherine Parr, whom already Henry's eyes had noted . . . .

Trumpets sounding before the startled baby's return, and so to the mother's chamber, to receive her blessing. Here's the king, on the pallet beside her majesty, uproarious with delight, a few upbelched drops of wine dribbing down his beard. Long after midnight the parade lasted . . . . And Jane, with hell gnawing inside her racked body, enduring it all . . . .

The day afterwards—the queen is not well. The next day, Wednesday—the queen is desperately ill. The extreme rites of the ancient Catholic church were administered to her on this day.

Somehow she mended. She was alive twelve days later. During all this time, Henry had raved and rioted like a madman, over his joy at an heir male; and the court had

followed his example. Splendid medicine for a queen, desperately fighting for her life . . . . There is only one better medicine, and that you will have soon enough, Jane Seymour.

Sir John Russell wrote Cromwell on the 24th, that the king had planned to move to Esher on that day; and that the state of Jane's health had prevented it. Perhaps the next day . . . .

She did not live over the night. Her rally on that day was the shattered body's last mute protest, before accepting the quiet caresses of the dark great lover who beds prince and commoner, woman and man, alike. She died; Henry decently withdrew to his own chamber, and had no word for any ear. And then he left Hampton Court for Windsor, leaving his council to arrange the funeral.

The ambassador from France dispatched home his own version. The queen had been let take cold; she had been nourished improperly. She was embalmed the next day; on Friday the hearse arrived, and the sad procession set out, the ladies in mourning even to their fans.

On November 12th the body was interred in St. George's chapel, Windsor. Gresham wrote to Cromwell, "I have caused twelve hundred masses to be said for the soul of our most gracious queen." This was in what is deemed to be Protestant England.

Henry wore black, which he detested, until Candlemas, February 12th next. The baby prince, with his mother's starry eyes and the beauty that Jane Seymour had had when Henry first knew her, was nursed at Havering Bower.

And Henry cast his eyes about again. Who would be the next to print her body upon the royal bed?

CHAPTER XXI

The Empty Bed

"SO Mistress Jane is out of it," said the first maid-of-honor to the second.

"Good riddance, by my maidhood!"

"Early in the day for jokes like that, you impish darling! She was an amiable trull—"

"But a trull, for all that. What with her 'Yes, sire,' 'Yes, sire,' 'Yes, sire,' till I was like to vomit! And now she is gone . . . ."

A silence fell upon them.

The second maid spoke first. "He looked at me, yester eve . . . . Head to toe . . . . I felt that his look stripped me."

"Tush! He—uh . . . . he took me off to his chamber, two nights after the queen died, to—to show me a new harpsichord he had got that day."

A giggle. "Did he show it to you?"

A reminiscent look in the bright brown eyes. "The harpsichord? 'Pon honor, I clear believe it slipped our minds entirely! He showed me other treasures . . . ."

"You naughty—"

"Pish, mistress, you grow froward! A new set of foils from Spain, a carpet of Bagdad, some—some comfits from France."

"Well, you are the soul of discretion, mistress, no doubt of that."

"So is Henry the king. Shrewd— Only last fortnight he said to some duke or other, 'Three may keep counsel, if

two are away. If I thought my cap knew my counsel, I'd throw it in the fire and burn it.' He would, too."

"It is all he has kept," in a quiet voice. "Manly beauty, strength, health, comeliness—all gone. Why, when I came first to court, he never passed a day without shooting, singing, dancing, wrestling, casting the bar, playing at the recorders, the flute, the virginals, arranging songs and making ballads. I've seen him fling himself over a moat, with a great pole . . . . And today, he has to be abetted to his horse's back . . . . A whale for body, a swine for manners . . . ."

"Is your head fast to you neck, darling?" queried the first maid. "No matter, I am in your heart, and keep counsel too. Ha, he could love then! I have a nurse who tended Mary Boleyn in her time. He wooed her like a gallant: he ate sulphur, he drank urine, to prove his affection. Then he went with the fairest maids in the realm; now he companions with ruffians and pimps, sharpers and trulls. Then he could eat like Gog and Magog; today, a pot of Rhenish and a pair of pickled herrings set him to belching like a fishwife full of beans. Yet, after all, he is the king. He took me off to his chamber. . . ."

"That look he gave me! As if a baboon about to clip a princess. And yet, a kingly baboon . . . ."

"That Jane Seymour was a peevish baggage. Lord and lown, bishop and clerk, were one to her. One day she spat upon an earl's coat; another day, she boxed York's ears, when his grace said some words to her of her soul. She has beaten the little Elizabeth till the princess wailed—"

"What good mother does less? Ay, they were a pair . . . . The swine and the trull! Yet, if he only stood upon sound legs . . . ."

"He has need of the surgeon now, what with the

French sickness that has come upon him. The only cure is a rose fresh on the stalk. Letting you out, my lady."

"I protest—"

"You dole out your maidhoods shrewdly, darling; but, if the men make no quarrel, neither will I. I misdoubt it will be neither of us the king will elect; and we are better off, no doubt. His queens have a strange malady of dying young; and I, for one, am curious to see how gray hairs grow on my own poll. No queen of Harry will ever find that out!"

Queen Jane had not been tombed a month, when Henry began to cast his eyes abroad for another wife. He sent for the privy council, and laid his heart before them. "I have had one Spanish queen, and two English maids. I have never bedded a Frenchwoman. Test out Francis on this matter. He owes me somewhat for the English women he has sampled, if rumor does him credit."

Word came back from France. "I am overhonored at the king's royal condescension. There is no unmarried dame, or widow, in my kingdom, whose hand my royal cousin of England may not have, at his pleasure."

"Spoken like a royal gentleman! Write word to Francis, bidding him send into the English pale at Calais the handsomest women in France, that I may cull among them myself."

There were headshakings from the council; but the message was sent.

A chillier breath out of France. "His majesty is desolated to thwart the will of the English monarch; but, when all is said, it is impossible to trot out the noble ladies of France, like mares at a fair, to have them show their shapes and paces. If his English majesty would indicate his preference . . . ."

His English majesty could, and did. "It is Marie de Longueville I will wed, and none other."

A chillier blast from France. Chatillon, the ambassador, bore it himself to the English king. "His French majesty is prostrated; but the lady is pledged to your nephew, the king of Scotland."

"I will have her, were she pledged to the Holy Ghost!"

"But, sire, you would not marry the wife of another!"

Henry lifted his great eyebrows. "She has not passed her word as yet, that I know. Tell your master I will do ten times as much for him, as Scotland can possibly do."

The ambassador departed, shaking his head.

Meanwhile, the royal bed stayed empty. There was talk in France, which seeped into England. Some of it came to Henry's own ears. Things did not go well with Henry's wives . . . . Queen Catherine had been poisoned —so rumor had it; Anne had forfeited a second head to her husband; Jane had been noised to death, in childbed. And the king had grown bloated, unwieldy, diseased . . . . a gross toad of a man.

Henry raged at this talk, part of which at least came too near the truth for comfort. He offered himself to a daughter of Portugal, his niece by Catherine; and to the duchess of Milan. He sought to wed his son by Queen Jane, now four months old, to the daughter of the emperor; he offered his illegitimatized bastard Mary to the heir of Portugal, and his illegitimatized daughter Elizabeth to the king of Hungary . . . . There were no takers. Meanwhile, he still sought Madame de Longueville, whom he said he loved with a recurrent undying love.

Chatillon flung his arms toward the horizon in regret. "There is the lovely sister of Marie de Longueville; there is the handsome duchess of Vendome . . . ."

"Bring them to Calais for my inspection."

"But, no, sire; that is imposseeble. Your majesty could doubtless send some trusted councillor to observe them."

"I am to bed them; can I send a deputy to do that? Neither can I send a deputy to see them. My own eyes, man, must stare them over; I must hear them sing, and see them singing."

Delays, delays, delays . . . . Meanwhile, Henry must have something to do. He flirted constantly with the pope. Had he not beheaded Anne; roasted heretics; dabbled in theology, leaning toward Rome? He flirted at the same time with the reformed states and princes of Germany . . . . Out came Henry's decrees: salvation is impossible, save through adherence to the creed of Rome, though the head of the Romish church must be repudiated; extolling the seven sacraments, the Apostles', the Athanasian, the Nicene creeds; enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, which sent sorrowing Cranmer's wife into exile, and his children into Germany, as a price of saving Cranmer from the stake; forbidding the cup of the communion to the laity; sustaining private masses and auricular confession . . . . Was this man a heretic? To the stake with him! Did he adhere to the Romish pope? Roast him! Out with abuses in religion; an end to useless holidays; down with miraculous shrines and holy wells; destruction to pilgrimages and religious processions; to the flames with equivocal sacred relics! The last monasteries and religious houses were confiscated, their lands and tenements were given to the king's intimates and courtiers . . . . And parliament was forced to pay for these royal aggrandizements.

Queen Catherine's confessors were dreadfully done to death. The relatives of Reginald Pole were jailed: Exeter and his wife; Lord Montague, and Geoffrey Pole, the brothers; their mother, the aging countess of Salisbury, last of the high blood of the Plantagenets; Sir Edward

Neville, Sir Nicholas Carew, master of the house, and two Cornish gentlemen, Kendall and Quintrell, all flung into the Tower on mushroom charges of treason. Reginald Pole was outside Henry's reach; all but the two women were done to death, and these retained in the Tower.

And still he could not have Marie de Longueville. And then she sailed for Scotland, and he gave over the project.

"Madame de Vendome?"

"I will not take the leavings of the Scottish King."

Cromwell, alarmed at this growing intimacy with France, suggested an alliance with one of the German princes of the Smalcaldic Lutheran League. For instance, the duchy of Cleves, with its dependencies of Berg, Mark, Ravensburgh, Juliers, and Ravenstein, under John the Pacificator, who had succeeded his father, John the Clement, in 1521. Sibylla, eldest daughter of John of Cleves, was wife to John Frederick, duke of Saxony, the chief of the league: Sibylla, noted for her beauty, her ample talents, her bright spirit. This lady had two sisters, Anne and Amelia . . . . Why should not his majesty mate with one of them?

England was already split into three camps. There was the party, led by the great Howards, Percies, Cliffords, and others, who looked for a remating with Rome. There was the Anglican church party, the dominant courtiers, who saw the church perfect, with all its rites and rituals, provided only an English king headed it, instead of a Romish pope. There was, third, the despised group of Protestants, Wickliffites, Lutherans, Puritans . . . . An underground group, flourishing among the middle classes, who had fanned the flames of Henry's break with Rome, for their own still hidden purposes. Latimer headed this group; Cranmer secretly leaned toward it. They always sided with the court party against Rome.

These three camps each sought to reach the royal heart through the royal bed. Two of these three camps, alarmed at the closening contact with France and Rome, urged the union with a German princess.

Henry lent an ear to them, and word was sent to John of Cleves, "the Lion of the Reformation."

The gallant elector of Saxony put by the project with scorn, when it was first opened. What, marry a German maid to this brutal and bloated monarch, who had beheaded one queen, and done to death two more by poison? So he spoke . . . .

"But, sire, England wavers towards us . . . . With her as ally, we can defy Rome, France, Spain . . . ."

"Well, have it so."

Word came to Henry that either of the two sisters, Anne or Amelia, might be his. Agents were sent to the bleak northern land to retell to kingly ears their charms; Master Holbein, the great painter, was commissioned to visit the court of the Pacificator, portray the sisterly beauties, and send the result of his brush to Henry, for the king's inspection.

Cromwell busied himself to see that the king received flattering portraits from his minions. Christopher Mount, Nicholas Wotton, and the rest, reported that for beauty, talent, and capability the sisters were unmatchable in the Christian world. Holbein transmitted two miniatures, both of more than usually comely maids; and, of the two, Anne was the essence of stately womanly loveliness.

"I will have her," laying a pudgy thumb on the face of Anne. "Bring her to me."

The girl had been born September 22, 1516, and was twenty-four years younger than the English king. She was twenty-three years old, and her device was two white swans, standing for candor and innocence. These had come

from her ancestor, Lohengrin, knight of the Swan, who had wedded the duchess of Brabant long before; just as Godfrey of Bouillon, later king of Jerusalem, claimed descent from a knight of the Swan. Clearly the house of Cleves was descended from this knight, who was said himself to be a swan, in some of the tales.

Henry chuckled grossly at the story. "Jupiter did not shrink from turning swan, to take Leda, wife of King Tyndareus, and by the god mother of starry Castor and Pollux, as of Clytemnestra and that Helen of Sparta and Troy, whose beauty has dinned man's ears for many ages. Now I shall play counter-Jove, and take this swan-daughter to wife. There should be a second Helen from a coupling with a maid so heavenly comely."

Word came from Christopher Mount to the wily Cromwell: "The lady Anne excels her sister, the duchess of Saxony, as the golden sun excels the silver moon. There is none like her for needlework; there is no man but praises her good virtues and honesty."

On February 6, 1539, the lady's father died. This delayed the proceedings. But the dowager duchess of Cleves, and Anne's brother, the new elector, urged on the mating with pandering haste. To see their daughter and sister a queen, to be allied with the Tudor house of England . . . .

Wotton gave a further and amplified report. The lady was unparallelled with the needle. She had had the same training that the brilliant Sibylla had had. She knew only her native tongue; could not sing or play upon any instrument; yet she was of good wit.

This was written from Duren, on August 11, 1539. The miniature from Holbein followed it, in a box in the form of a white rose, delicately wrought in ivory, which unscrewed and bared the miniature at the bottom . . . .

"I will have her," said Henry.

That month the matrimonial treaty was drawn up at Windsor. The contract of marriage was signed at Dusseldorf on September 4th. Even the English Romish party, remembering the Flemish queen of England, Philippa of Hainault, mother of the Black Prince and John of Gaunt, of Lionel, Edmund, Thomas of Woodstock, were kind of heart toward this well-starred maiden.

On the 5th of November Henry announced to his council that he expected the arrival of his intended spouse in about three weeks, and that he proposed to proceed to Canterbury, to receive her. On the first of the month his admiral, with a great company of lords, departed for Calais, to which place she was to be conducted by four hundred horsemen of her brother William, duke of Cleves.

On November 14th the king left London for Hampton Court, to wait news of the certain arrival of the lady. On the last day of the month the courier notified the king that Anne would reach Calais on the 8th of December. Plans were made for her reception and conduct to Greenwich, where the marriage would be consummated, amid the glitter of Yuletide festivities. The first day of the year was to see the entrance of the royal pair into London, and thence to Westminster, for the coronation on Candlemas day . . . .

And so Anne left Dusseldorf, her mother, her brother, her sisters, for the last time; bade farewell to the Rhine; and set out for the king beside Thames banks.

ANNE OF CLEVES

1539

From the painting by Holbein, in the Louvre, Paris

CHAPTER XXII

The Mare From Flanders

ANNE and her train proceeded slowly toward the waiting English monarch. Twenty-four . . . . life ahead of her . . . . It had never been kind to her, she reflected slowly; best make the most of this hour. What tomorrow would bring forth . . . . So, for the first day of the journey, from Dusseldorf to Berg—a mere twenty miles. Up with the Prussian dawn, and another score of miles to Cleves itself. After a night here, she took a last look at the Spoykanal, which joined the town to the Rhine; she gave a sigh before castellated Schwanenburg, where her family lived, with its immense tower, the Schwanenturm, a hitching-post for clouds. Then past the churches—the Stiftskirche, the Annexkirche. And so, on the third morning, off through the glorious forests to Ravenstein. Day by day this overland progress through the Low Countries continues, each day marking the same distance: to Bertinburg; and through Tolburgh and Hoggenstrete to Antwerp.

Here England spoke a gesture of welcome. Four miles without the town, an English cavalcade—merchants chiefly, grateful to distant Henry for his strong name, which bucklered them throughout a world's trading: merchants in velvet coats and chains of gold, a half hundred of them. They arrived, she with the new cavalcade, at the city's self before sundown. What matter? Light the torches, eight score of them, and squire the lady to her English lodging here, where she kept open house for a day and a night.

The next day the merchants Godsped her with a rich gift, and set her on her way to Stetkyn. Then, at the same

rate, Tokyn, Burges, Oldenburgh, Newport, Dunkirk, Gravelines—with the chivalrous captain here roaring out a shot of guns in her honor. The next day to the English pale at Calais. It was the 11th of December, St. Damasus' day by the old reckoning: but what have we Protestants to do with saints and their holydays?

Here's the border of the English possessions. Out they turned to greet her: Lord Lisle, deputy of Calais; the lieutenant of the castle; the knight porter, the city marshal. Here's Sir George Carew, captain of Rosbank, with the captain of the spears beside him, and the garrison cavalry, all freshly furbished up; even the men-at-arms are gallant in velvet coats and chains of gold; even the archers sparkle. And so into Calais, to be greeted by the royal envoys: Southampton, the lord admiral; Lord William Howard; and many more. Jane Seymour's brother-in-law, Gregory Cromwell, rides at the head of two dozen gentlemen in satin-damask coats; the lords wore each four hues of cloth of gold and purple velvet, with chains of gold of great worth. Behind all marched two hundred yeomen in the royal hues, red and blue. Among the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber rides William Culpepper, whose head is firm on his shoulders still. When wine loosens his tongue, he has tales to tell: including a pretty one about Mistress Catherine Howard, the young daughter of the great house. In the train that met Anne of Cleves were kinsmen of Catherine of Aragon, of Anne Boleyn, of Jane Seymour; as well as of the Howards and the unimportant family of Parr. In Harry's England one thing mattered, and one only: to stand within the king's smile, and not in the shadow of his averted head.

In her guttural home speech, the thrilled princess spoke to the captain of her own train. "That great gentleman among the English—his coat tied with four hundred aiglettes and trefoils of gold, my maid tells me—who is he?"

"That's the lord admiral, the earl of Southampton, Highness."

"Southampton, you call him? He make at me such a strange look; why he make at me such a strange look?"

The captain shrugged. "It may be the English way, when one sees so fair a princess."

He was gallant. And the princess was satisfied.

"Oh!" Her hands to her ears, just beyond the lantern gate, as the flotilla of great ships burst forth with a peal of guns that startled all the train.

Her interpreter is kept busy, explaining the names of the ships, poured into his ears by the enthusiastic lord admiral. "This one is the Lion, Highness; this the Broomstakes, you call him? Sweepstakes it is, Highness. Banners of silk and gold—one hundred on each. There are thirty-one trumpets, and a double drum, Highness—the like never heard before." He stopped, with coughing; for the great smoke made by the salute of a hundred and fifty guns so fouled the air, that one man could not see his fellow at his shoulder.

So to her lodgings. Here's the mayor and his brethren, humbly offering fifty sovereigns of gold to her highness. Here are the plans for the next day: a cannon shot, endless jousting, dancing, all the pastimes of royalty . . . . Day after day, while the waves stayed perturbed, as if warning the blue-eyed princess that there was rough weather ahead.

On English soil, Harry fumed and huffed at the delay. Well, if he could not bed this beauty at once, there were things he could do . . . . Call on the executioner: let the old abbot of Glastonbury, the abbot of Tendring, and two more, bloody English soil, to keep a king alive in his idleness.

What? Yuletide already, and the winds and waves still froward? Anne had to sit down to her Christmas festivities

in Calais, willy-nilly. Two days later, St. John's Day by the old reckoning, and the weather calmed. At noon the queen and her suite embarked; a royal convoy of fifty sail went with her, and so fair was the wind that before five in the afternoon she had landed at Deal. Here's Sir Thomas Cheyney, lord warden of the port, to spread English soil beneath her feet. So to the new Walmer castle, to change her tire, and greet the duke and duchess of Suffolk, and a suffocating throng of bishops, knights, esquires, ladies. To Dover castle, to rest until the following Monday, a windy and inclement hour. Well, Harry had commanded that she set out: so set out she did, in despite of wind and weather. So toward Canterbury. On Barham Downs His Grace himself met her, with the bishops of Ely, St. Asaph, St. David's, and Dover. That night she slept at St. Augustine's without Canterbury; the next night, at Sittingbourne.

Still perplexed, for all of the raucous welcomings, she said aside to her captain: "They look at me with such strangeness of eyes, these English. Is it the way English to look so?"

"They are a savage people, Highness, who do not even speak our language. It may be that they look savage too . . . ."

New Year's even at last . . . . Last hour of the year 1539 . . . . Norfolk, Lord Dacre of the South, Lord Mountjoye, the knights and esquires of Norfolk and Suffolk, the barons of the Exchequer, met her at Reynham, made their devoir, and led her to the bishop's house at Rochester, where she passed New Year's Day.

Harry huffed, Harry fumed and smoked, at the delay. He called Cromwell aside. "As much silly ado about this foreign maid, as if she were another daughter of Isabella of Spain."

"But, sire—her dignity—"

"Tuh! It's not her dignity I want to see, and fondle, and bed. I grow weary of all this pother. On the morrow I will visit her privily, to nourish my love with sight of her."

He sent Sir Antony Browne, master of the horse, to notify the princess that he had a New Year's gift for her own hands, if she would please to receive it.

Sir Antony Browne entered the girl's presence, took one look at her face, and his own face hardened to a mask of iron. His face so set, he spoke what was on his mind to say, and departed.

"Well?" Southampton asked him cynically, as he put foot to stirrup to return to impatient Henry.

The knight's face woke to amazed consternation. "*That* stymaid, for Henry! That thing for a queen! Never, since I was weaned, have my eyes taken such a shock, as on seeing her."

"I saw her before," said Southampton soothingly.

Sir Anthony grunted savagely. "And, when I call to mind how she was represented to be of all fairness—"

"What will you say to Harry?"

"By God, I'd cut my tongue out before I'd tell him what I read in her face! For her sake, I pray God he was stricken blind this sunup!"

The king met him, all impatience. "What's she like, Antony?"

A non-committal smile. "Sire, that I must leave for your own eyes to fathom. I have seen the picture of Master Holbein, and you have seen it. You have shared to me what men have written of her. Now it is for your own eyes to range over her. She is a princess, sire, of high birth."

Henry heard little of this. Smiling in anticipation, he turned and left the knight. He went to the palace where the intended queen was lodged. With no announcement, he

pushed by the shivering arras, and stood before his betrothed.

Anne of Cleves looked up, to see a great bloated stooped giant of a man, his face scarred with high living, his body puffed and dropsical, with the pits of worse ills marring his countenance. His eyes were twitching with consternation, his nostrils were curved with distaste, his mouth drooped downward.

A few agitated words, and she knew who was before her.

Henry saw a homely, stupid-seeming maid . . . . matron in appearance already . . . . a *hausfrau* . . . .

She quivered down to her knees before him.

The dose might be nauseous, but he could take it like a gentleman and a king. With some civil words he addressed her, gently lifted her to her feet, kissed the *hausfrau* face.

She answered, in her own native speech, called high Dutch.

Henry's ears were outraged at the harsh gutturals. His ears were meant for music . . . .

Less than twenty words in the whole meeting . . . .

He excused himself from her presence, and bid the lord admiral and the rest of her escort appear before him.

He looked at them evilly. "How like you this woman, this German princess? I bid you tell me, do you hold her so fair, personable, and beautiful, as report has been made unto me? I bid you tell me the truth."

The lord admiral bowed his head. "Sire, I take her not to be fair, but of a brown complexion."

"So," said Henry, clenching his great fists. "And whom may a man trust? It is not there—no such thing as has been shown to me of her by her pictures, or by report. I blush that men have praised her as they have done. I love her not."

"She is a princess, sire."

"Yes, she is a princess." There was the breath of winter in his tones. "Her complexion is coarse; her features are gnarled; her face is pitted with the pox. Grace of manner? As much as a sow. Skill in the dance? As much as a cow elephant. Sing? All she can do is grunt out this devil's tongue of hers, which is as harsh to my ears as the sweet converse of swine. Even her dress is as out-of-date as her complexion. If you think I would bed that mare of Flanders . . . ."

"Sire—"

His fist crashed down on the council table. "A great Flanders brood mare; I'll have none of her. Do you, Cromwell, as you treasure your own head, find me some way to be rid of this wench."

There was the matter of the New Year's gift—a partlet of sable skins to wear about her neck, and a muff and tippet of rich sables. Henry's hands had intended to bear it to her. Now Sir Antony Browne took it in, softening the rigor of the outraged king's message. Sir Antony, Lord Russell, Sir Anthony Dennis, Cromwell, were made the receptacles for the outvented royal ire. Cromwell especially was blamed—as well he might be.

The wily minister shrugged. It was Admiral Fitzwilliam, earl of Southampton, who was to blame. When he found the princess so different from her picture by word and brush, he should have stayed her at Calais, till he had given word to his royal master that she differed from what rumor had of her.

Southampton glared evilly at Cromwell. "I was invested with no such authority, sire. I was bid bring her to England, and bring her to England I did."

Cromwell swung swiftly upon him. "Your letters commended the beauty of the lady."

"I but reported what others said. Should I say word against her, who was culled out to be my queen?"

"Damn you for zanies! Does this bickering make the wench fit to serve small beer, or bear slops to the swine-pen? Why, she'd fright away a blind man in a tavern! Find me some means to break this engagement, and at once!"

CHAPTER XXIII

The Maid Miscalled

WHEN a king speaks, men obey. A council was summoned in all haste, at which Henry's ministers solemnly declared that Anne's precontract of marriage with Francis of Lorraine was a legal bar to her union with the English king.

Anne had progressed to Dartford, her heart heavy, her mind overclouded by the strange want of enthusiasm in English faces and words. She was delayed here; while Osliger and Hostoden, her brother's ambassadors, were summoned to produce documentary evidence that the contract had been dissolved. His majesty's conscience was so tender . . . .

They had no legal proofs. But the engagement, they affirmed, had been merely a conditional agreement between the parents of the parties, both in their minority; and it had been dissolved five years gone. The paper was registered in the royal chancery of Cleves; and they engaged, within three months, to present to the king an authentic extract.

The subservient among the council shook troubled heads. This was not enough; an illegal marriage might endanger the succession.

Cranmer shook his own head; so did the bishop of Durham. There was no legal bar to the marriage, as far as they could see.

Here is wily Cromwell speaking. Henry must consider what it would mean to cast this affront upon the princes of the Smalcaldic League. There were hours when the demands of state . . . . On and on and on . . . .

Henry faced them blackly. "Is there then no remedy, but I must needs put my neck into this yoke?"

There was no other way. And so orders were given for a most splendid solemnization of the wedding.

Another magnificent procession and pageant. On St. Genevieve's day, the 3rd of January, on a fair plain on Blackheath, at the foot of Shooter's Hill, a rich tent of cloth of gold was pitched for the queen, and many other tents and pavilions, all holding braziers burning costly perfumes. From these to the park gate at Greenwich all the furze and bushes were lopped down, for the commonalty to see what royalty did in public. By the park pales, on the east, stood the merchants of the Steelyard; on the west side thronged the merchants of Genoa, Florence, Venice, and Spain, all in coats of velvet. The London merchants, the aldermen, the esquires, the council of the city, the knights, gentlemen-pensioners, serving-men, the nobles, upward in number of twelve hundred . . . . Here's the maid of Flanders, with the English nobility around her . . . . Here's the king and his train . . . . Latin orations rained in the deaf ears of the German princess . . . . Answers by the interpreter . . . . Henry's disgusted eyes ranging from the pitted face of the mare herself, to her attendant ladies, all garbed in such execrable fashion that they looked like very mummies.

She did not lift her eyes to Harry's face: she saw his garb, and goodly tire it was. He was frocked in purple velvet, broidered over with flat gold of damask, with small lace between, traverse-wise. Sleeves and breast were cut and lined with cloth of gold, and clasped with great buttons of diamonds, rubies, and orient pearls. Sword and girdle were gemmed with emeralds and other stones; cap and bonnet were so bestudded with jewels that no man could value them. Beside all this there was a collar of such balas, rubies,

and pearls, that few men ever saw the like. Henry wore England on his back. And he was twice the girl's age, unwieldy and diseased in person, with a face scrawled with the mire of indulgent living. This was the first meeting of state; just before the hasty meeting of the council.

After the council met, and Cromwell had spoken, Henry looked once at this minister. It was not a kind look: never thereafter did Cromwell receive one from his king.

The lord chamberlain inquired of the king, "Sire, what day will your majesty name for the coronation of the queen?"

"There will be room for that," Henry said gruffly, "when she is a queen."

He even forced the princess to come before him, and make a solemn protestation that she was free from all precontracts. This she did.

Well, there was no way out of it. On Monday, Henry announced that he would go through with it; and ordered that the nuptials be celebrated on the following day, January 6th, the Epiphany or feast of kings.

Short notice to the queen: she was used to being ruffled by now. Let the wedding hour be fixed at eight in the morning, to jar her further. Essex was named, with her courtier the earl of Overstein, to lead her to the altar. Essex was absent, at the hour named; Cromwell was substituted in his place. Essex had arrived, before the procession started; Cromwell returned to Henry, to tell him this.

Henry said coldly to the minister, "My lord, if it were not to satisfy the world and my realm, I would not do what I must do this day for any earthly thing."

An officer of the household spoke: "The queen is ready."

Out came Henry with the lords and officers of state. Anne was not yet here. Frowning, Henry sent the lords to fetch her.

The ceremony at last. Then a mass for the newly wedded in the king's closet, with each offering a taper. After mass came wine and spices; and then the king off to his chamber, and Anne to hers, Suffolk on one side, Norfolk on the other.

After nine of the clock, a new procession, with the two of them offering and dining together. After dinner, she changed garb, and went with the king to even-song, as she had gone to mass in the morning, and afterwards supped with him. Then came banquets, masques, and merry disports . . . . all under that lowering cloud of royal displeasure.

The morning after the wedding, Henry, raging at what he had gone through, gathered his intimates around him. Cromwell was not among them.

"Well, I've tupped that ewe."

A snicker of ribald amusement. "One more maid to your sire's credit," from a smirking courtier.

"Maid?" a gross laugh. "She's no more a virgin than I am. She was a cut loaf already, when I bedded her; her castle gates had been forced."

"Well, there's comfort at times in a practiced charger, sire."

Henry laughed at this. "That pox on her dirty face—I've a shrewd guess where she got that from. That's what these devil-spawned ministers of mine have bedded me to!"

They smirked agreement to his majesty. Not one of them read in his words other than a hatred of the woman, a desire to vent his spleen in any way that his whim willed.

More pageantry and feasting, and most of her train at last set back for the homeland, leaving the disconsolate ignored queen behind them. Anne had no graces; but, more than this, she had nothing of a courtier's sycophancy, so that she could not bring herself to humiliate her person and spirit before this royal boor who had flouted her so openly.

Henry called Cromwell to him, scowling, as was his habit. "The queen grows stubborn and wilful with me."

The queen, all troubled, sent pleading to Cromwell to come and speak with her. He felt his own neck trembling, and refused.

On the third of March, Henry sent Courtenay, marquess of Exeter, his cousin, and Henry Pole, Lord Montague, another close cousin, to the block. The charge was that they were in correspondence with Reginald Pole, later the celebrated cardinal, whom Henry called his enemy . . . . Nothing in this to cheer up the unfavored queen.

"One thing is sure," Henry told his courtiers. "I can never overcome my aversion to that bitch, enough to make me consider her as my wife."

This was in private. In public, when Parliament met, on the 12th of April, St. Sabas' day, her dower was settled according to the usual form. Wedded four months . . . .

May the first—and the three days following—Sir Thomas Seymour, brother of the late queen, Sir John Dudley, Sir George Carew, and other brilliant knight, held joust, tourney, and barrier at Durham House, all attired in white velvet, in honor of the king's recent marriage to Anne of Cleves. The royal pair were there in person, and shared together the hospitality of their bachelor hosts.

The last time that they appeared in public, this. Henry had his own crew about him at last. No more men of the stature of Thomas More or his father's advisers; these men were dubbed his pimps, his panders, by the council: and they felt flattered at the names. Chief among these was Wriothesley. He was Henry's tongue, save in most private moments. As the king's tongue, he spoke to the gentlemen of the chamber and of the privy council: "We should pity the poor case in which His Highness stands, in being yoked to a queen whom he can not love."

The council, the gentlemen of the chamber, waited discreetly for further unfolding of royal will.

"It is surely expedient," the pander proceeded, "to emancipate the king from a wedlock—and a bedlock, gentles all—so little to his taste. His majesty is like to vomit every time he nears this queenly mare of Flanders . . . ."

A few of the more abased of his hearers said, "True, true." The rest kept a caponic silence.

"His majesty's conscience, ever tender, is pained at keeping a Lutheran wife," continued Wriothesley.

"In her young days, Mistress Anne Boleyn, were she Moslem or salvage sun-worshipper, might still have been acceptable to Harry's conscience," spoke up somewhat sturdily an elderly knight.

"What did you whisper? Shall I carry that word to the king?"

The old knight turned scarlet. "Sir, I spoke nothing. I but coughed. My neck trembles, as it is."

Anne, the Flemish queen, had stood high in favor a few weeks, no doubt of that. Catherine Basset had written to her mother, wife of the king's illegitimate uncle, Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, begging for a second-hand kirtle to wear every day, and for the present of two crowns, as well as for a word spoken in the ear of Mother Lowe, at the head of the Dutch maids of honor; and ending with the pious request that the Holy Ghost continue to protect the good lady. Catherine received her crowns, her second-hand kirtle, and an appointment as maid of honor to Anne. She at least resembled no brood mare; and Henry was of his own choice in such matters. But the request had come through Anne.

Cromwell at last came to her, sure that he was serving Henry at last. He advised the queen to do her utmost to

render herself agreeable to the king— sending in this message in secret. Anne's Flemish maidens were about to be sent home; the queen, startled by this warning, altered from a cold deportment to a cheap pretence of ardor, which rendered her the more repulsive to the king.

Henry hated Cromwell, for arranging the match. He had confided to his minister the plan for the divorce; and he rightly attributed to that minister this suspicious alteration in Anne's outward deportment . . . . Dangerous to play ducks and drakes with royal favor, no doubt of that.

And there was Mistress Catherine Howard, a froward maid about court, who had caught the king's roving eye, and held it for the moment.

Well, it must be an end to Cromwell soon; but, first, he could serve the royal purpose. There were still two noble ladies whom Henry desired to see beheaded: Gertrude, marchioness of Exeter, widow of one of his latest victims; and Margaret, countess of Salisbury, mother of the other. Cromwell must do this for him . . . . And so the king bestowed upon Cromwell the honors and estates of his deceased kinsman, Bouchier, earl of Essex . . . . Easy bribe, not to be enjoyed for long . . . .

Cromwell was a wether to the king's taste. On May 10th he produced in the house of lords, as evidence against the countess, a vestment of white silk, found in her wardrobe, broidered with the arms of England in front, wreathed with pansies and marigolds, and on the back the representation of the sacred host of the communion, with the five wounds of Jesus, and his very name. "It is treason, my lords!" cried out Cromwell. They held with him. Moreover, she had been so treasonable as to write to her absent son. Infamy patent to all! For this she was condemned to death, without being suffered to say one word in her own behalf. The marchioness of Exeter suffered the same fate

at the hands of justice—English justice.

The lords hesitated indeed at this. What, condemn to death, without a hearing? Cromwell summoned the judges to his own house; and put the problem to them slily. The judges bowed; what courts could not do, Parliament could. Cromwell reported this to the house; and it passed the bill, that the king might be satisfied.

Precedent, this, for laying low any presumptuous person. Cromwell had wrenched this from the judges; what more fitting, than that he should himself meet what he had devised for others? A month later, Norfolk himself arrested Cromwell at the Council board, and hied him off to the Tower, by command of the king. For Cromwell had arranged the mating with the Flanders mare. To glut his ill will further, the king sent to the stake also Dr. Barnes, the pious and learned man who stood so high in favor with the queen.

A few days after Cromwell's arrest, she was sent to Richmond, under pretence that she needed a change of air. And Harry looked still on Mistress Catherine Howard with fervent favor. What would be his next step?

It was on the 10th of June, 1540, that Cromwell was arrested; on the 28th of the succeeding month he placed his overshrewd head on the block, and died on Tower Hill. He did not die a Protestant: England, as one separatist violently complained to another the next day, was full of men and women who spurned the old anti-Christ in St. Peter's, but died professing full sanctity. Cromwell's word had been that he died a Catholic, and no heretic. He had been no butcher's son; his father was a blacksmith. Not such a low flight, for such a start: upward, by oiling the way to the king's will upon others, to be lord privy seal, vicegerent to the king, knight of the garter, earl of Essex, lord great chamberlain of the realm . . . . Well, dust he began, dust he ended,

with his offering of scarlet blood to nourish the grass blades on Tower Hill.

"He is dead, sire—dead of his own wickedness. There are asps who, in their extreme fury, turn their venom upon themselves in the end. This maddened man was of their kindred,"—one of the king's creatures speaking.

Henry's broad reddened face crinkled shrewdly. "My heel is shod with steel. Such asps but do waste their fury, when they turn their fangs upward."

"Your majesty is invulnerable, as was Achilles," flattered a windy youth.

"Tush, man, I am no Achilles. For his heel gaped to take his death blow; and my heel crushes. Alas," and he rubbed a pudgy hand against a pocked cheek, "I fear I wear my heel higher."

"There is one thing to be said for your majesty's court, and for this England that you have made," unctuously interrupted a practiced bower: "You have made our hour on this earth the fairest hour that man has yet known, since Eden day: standing beside God in your justice toward men."

"Well, Tony, I should be the last man to deny such a soft impeachment—if I understood its purport. Justice? Well, as to that, do you mean that God ends his thousands by plague and whirlwind, and that I—"

"Ah, sire, the presumptuous fall at the deity's nod, or the king's. But, strangely enough, though this talk sprang from word of Cromwell's end, my mind bent another way entirely. It is of life, and not of death, I spoke."

Now Henry's great face cracked open in a smile. "I take it you speak of the matter of a few bastards more or less—"

"Ah, no, sire—Master Solomon, in the old days, peered your majesty in that road. But I said the fairest hour the world has known—a matter in which Solomon was not ankle high to your height."

Henry leaned forward, face writhing with interest. A good hearty talk, with men who understood one's motives, and did not bar them, was always a balm. "By God's grace, Tony, out with this matter you speak of!"

"Under your favor, it has been the custom hitherto, upon God's kneestool, that a man stayed as he was born. If he was born a prince, a prince he lived, unless kingship came his way. If he was born a butcher's son—"

"—Or a blacksmith's son—"

"Precisely, sire. You have altered all this. Princes you have laid low, when they showed the souls of commoners; commoners you have reared high, when they showed the souls of nobles. It was so in Eden hour, and not since. I doubt not but that man can not rise higher than Henry's age, no matter what bleak centuries come after us."

"In that, Tony, you speak true. That much I have striven to do—to find merit in man, no matter his birth station, and give it its full upward soar. I have done much . . . . Man has his way of binding chains upon himself; of hardening his life into rigid patterns, which in the end choke and strangle his aspiring spirit. That I have done: and one other thing I have done, though there has never been prince so bound and fettered as I." He drained the tankard by his side, morosely signalled for another, shook his head dolefully.

A sympathetic sigh breathed through the knot of courtiers. One at last, a slight gulp in his voice, queried, "What is this other thing, sire?"

Henry shook a saddened head. "Bound and fettered as I, I said. Now look you: I looked abroad, when I was named king of this land and saw Rome festering in its corruption, a worse cess than hell could hold; I saw Spain a plague-spot, Germany recreant to our Lord, France virulent with intrigue and debauchery, the rest of the world evil. I saw no

godliness in the world, but in merry England; I saw, gentles all," and the inevitable punctuating fist crashed down on the table, "no godliness but in myself. A little matter I did later, to end the wicked Romish sway, while we still stayed Catholic servants of our Catholic God. I saw men bound in ruts of birth and place, and I broke this monster's back too. I saw that noblest, that highest of all men's passions, love—" a reverential look crossed the mandril face, "made a bargain counter merchandise, shopped and bartered here and there at the dictates of a bag of sovereigns or an acre of land, the tithes of a city or the rule of an empire . . . . I saw love made the spoils of commerce or statecraft. A man loved a woman; did he marry her? No, by God's body! He loved her—if he was gallant; but he wedded her pock-faced vinegar-mouthed spinster aunt, or some ploughed foreign bitch . . . . This was wrong. This was not God's will. This was not my will! An end to this, I said in my heart's core. And look you how I have been clipped and gelded under this monster! Forced to wed my brother's widow, against my will and the laws of God—"

"Ay, Harry—but that was the doing of the ministers of your father."

"And then, coupled by her lust to a wanton; then mated to a gentle soul, who could not survive birth-pangs; and latest of all wed, not to the English maid I sought—"

"Was it not a French maid, sire?"

"It may have been—my mind forgot me, for the moment. —Wedded by a blacksmith's son, whom I myself lifted to be man beside me, to a Flemish whore, with a body like a river-horse and a face like the wrath of God over the cities of the plain! An end to all this, I say! If I am remembered for one thing, it will be this: that I have taken the shackles off the fettered body of love! After me, men will say, I will wed where I love, for this was Harry's way.

No matter of dowry, no matter of political alliances, no matter of uncles and aunts and such small deer, but the cry within me of man to woman, which I hear and hark to! I have had enough queens by statecraft; I want a queen that my heart wants! All men will grow as high."

"There is no king like Harry!" a delighted chorus of approbation. "No matter what other men have done, he has done this: he has taken the fetters off love!"

And Henry, listening to this, nodded sagely. Say what one might, he was ringed with the wisest heads in all Europe. The wisest heads still on their necks, that is.

CHAPTER XXIV

The King's Sister

A MONTH before Cromwell died, Marillac, writing to his master Francis I, spoke of matters in the English court:

> There is talk of some loss of love, and a new affection for another lady. The queen has been sent to Richmond. This I know, that the king, who promised in two days to follow her, has not done so, and does not seem likely to do so, for the road of his progress does not lead that way. Now it is said in the court that the said lady has left on account of the plague, which is in the city. This is not true, for if there had been suspicion of the kind, the king would not have remained on any business, however important, for he is the most timid person in the world in such cases.

France pondered this, and waited for further advice. The courtly king smiled wrily: but for mischance, it would be a French queen who was now breathing the solitary air at Richmond. Another lady: and who would she be? Two at least of the king's wives had proven their friendliness to France, in the old days. Anne had the brisker spirit; but Jane had limbs like alabaster . . . .

On St. Pulcheria's day, the 6th of July, the chancellor, the archbishop of Canterbury, Suffolk, Norfolk, Southampton, the bishop of Durham, filed solemnly before the house. They had come on a grievous errand.

One bored member said to another, "Why not fling a van full of ditto-marks in the air, and dispense with speech?"

"Silence, man, for God's sweet sake!"

It was the chancellor speaking. They had grave doubts of the validity of the marriage of the king and queen, he proceeded. They had themselves been instrumental in this marriage, and their consciences were pained in the matter. There was the all-important matter of the succession to the crown, which was, or might be affected.

"Wake me up when it is time to vote," the member yawned to his fellow. "I have this speech by heart now."

The chancellor was still droning away. It was highly needful that a convocation of the clergy should probe into this matter. If only the house would draw up a petition to the king, humbly beseeching that this might be done . . . .

A miracle . . . . Here was the petition, already prepared. Both houses of parliament concurred in it, and presented it jointly to the king.

Henry graciously responded that he could refuse nothing to the estates of the realm. He was ready, he said, to answer any questions that might be put to him, for he had no other object in view but the glory of God, the welfare of the realm, and the triumph of the truth.

What an exceedingly good old king this good old king must be!

Next day the convocation received the matter. The clergy committed it, to a group made up of the two archbishops, four bishops, and eight divines. Fourteen men of God, serving only the glory of the English God, the welfare of the English realm, the triumph of the English truth . . . .

Weighty reasons were given for releasing the sovereign from his matrimonial chains. Item, first, the queen had been precontracted to the prince of Lorraine. Item, second, the king having espoused her against his will, had not given an inward consent to the marriage, which he had

never completed; and the whole nation had a great interest in the king's having more issue, which they saw he could never have by this queen.

Poor Henry, still fettered by statecraft! Why should a nation's interest stand between him and the queen of his heart? Ah, an error: this was by no means the queen of his heart. The king sighed, when he heard his own hard case. How delicate a point, that he himself had not inwardly consented to the marriage, which he had hence never completed, for all of his tupping and tumbling. Ay, he must consent inwardly, next time . . . .

Witnesses were called—many of them. The lords in waiting gave their testimonies; the gentlemen of the king's chamber added their stories; the queen's ladies chatted gaily away of intimate matters. Here's the countess of Rutland, here's Lady Edgecombe, here's troublesome Lady Rochford, showing the white petals of the kingly lily. When the king left the queen's apartment it was his morning wont to say, "Farewell, darling!" At night he was habited to saying, "Good night, sweetheart!" The queen herself had told them this . . . . Was ever such a noble and forgiving king, especially one who lacked inward consent all the time to the union? They had probed the queen, they said; had she told Mother Lowe, her countrywoman and confidante, of the king's neglect? But no; she had received quite as much of his majesty's attention, the queen said, as she had wished.

More matters had come out. The ladies of the court had mimicked and ridiculed the unfortunate queen, with the king's egging on . . . .

Henry himself testifying, while Europe listened with bated breath to his self-revelation of his innate nobility. "I had heard much, both of her excellent beauty and virtuous condition. But when I saw her at Rochester, it re-

joiced my heart that I kept me free from making any pact or bond with her, till I saw her myself; for then, I assure you, that I liked her so ill, and so far contrary to that she was praised, that I was woe that ever she came to England; and deliberated with myself, that if it were possible to find means to break off, I would never enter yoke with her." He called upon the admiral, Southampton, the Flemish great master, Hostodon, and the master of the horse, to verify this. Ay, he called upon Cromwell, under sentence of death, to verify that he had repeatedly, before the day of his marriage, as well as afterwards, shown his lack of consent to the wedding.

On July 9th the convocation of clergy, not one voice dissenting, declared the marriage null and void, and announced that both parties were free to wed again. On the 10th, in Latin and English, Cranmer announced this to the house of lords, and delivered the documents attesting it; which went to the Commons at once. A bill to invalidate the marriage was twice read, and was passed in July 13th, again unanimously. England was quick to spare the conscience of the king from hurt . . . . Eight days for the whole pretty business: a queen unmade in only two days more than it took God's self to make a universe.

Cranmer had pronounced the nuptial benediction. Cranmer now dissolved the marriage. In less than seven years, he had thrice had this same edifying rôle.

The queen, being unfamiliar with English speech and ways, was spared the embarrassment of personal appearance in the matter.

Off went Suffolk, Southampton, Wriothesley, to Richmond, to break this gentle news to the queen. Wriothesley did the talking: he was closest to Henry's ear. Had not the king told him that, though he and the queen had cohabited for four, almost for five, months, there was as yet no pros-

pect of issue? Why keep a brood mare, who did not breed? Morever—this too Henry had told him—the queen had wearied at last of her vain attempts to learn the English language, gaming at cards, music, singing, dancing, and had flashed back at his majesty, "If I had not been made to marry your majesty, I might have fulfilled my engagement to another, to whom I had plighted my hand." Cause enough for a breach . . . .

It was Wriothesley who spoke to the queen. "Your highness, I have word for your ear from the king and the parliament of England."

"Whatever it is his pleasure, it is my delight to hear," through the handy interpreter.

"His majesty is pleased to annul this marriage with you."

The interpreter started to speak; but the queen, at the word "annul," guessed all the rest. She did not forget what had happed to Anne Boleyn. She turned the hue, the texture, of marble. As the last words came, her eyes closed, as good marbles always show. Her head sank back, the pit-marks on her face glowing brown. She breathed once, and incontinently fainted to the floor.

Wriothesley stood solicitously above her, heart dancing. Sweet word, this, to carry to a king's ear!

All soothing words now, for her shattered hearing.

Was her head, too, to lie upon the block?

Ah, but no! If she would only resign the title of queen, the king would adopt her as his sister, giving her precedence over all the ladies of the court, saving only the next queen, and the two young princesses, daughters of the king.

A postcript: she would be endowed with estates, to the value of three thousand pounds a year.

Anne heard these words with delight. With the aid of

the commissioners, she indited a letter to his majesty, obligingly expressing her full acquiescence in his pleasure.

The king could not believe his own eyesight. Not so had Catherine of Aragon behaved! Well, back to his council, to dictate what sort of letter Anne would be allowed to write to her brother, the duke of Cleves—a letter that would make the whole matter appear friendly, and of her willing; with an insistence that, no matter how her brother or other relatives took the news, she must be bound to stay complacent and friendly.

Within three days she was addressing her former husband as "my most benign and good brother."

The commissioners took to her a token of the king's esteem, in the shape of five hundred marks in gold, toward the first year's allowance. In return, she sent back to the king her marriage-ring, to establish her sincerity in his eyes. The letter to her brother was duly drawn up, ending, "God willing, I purpose to lead my life in this realm." It was signed Anna, Duchess born of Cleves, Gulick, Geldre, and Berge, "and your loving sister." She would never, she assured the commissioners, "repute herself as his grace's wife." She wrote already of the "pretensed marriage." Another letter to her brother warned him to so conduct himself, that she fare not the worse for his actions . . . . A memory of Anne Boleyn never left her. She was—she knew she was—a prisoner in England, a hostage for the behavior of her brother and the other German princes. Anne Boleyn had gone to the block; Cromwell, Dr. Barnes, the principal agents in the marriage, were already dead.

Patents were spread upon the records, stating that the marriage was never consummated, since the conditions were not fulfilled in time; that the marriage was dissolved by mutual consent; and, she being content to abide in the realm, and to yield to its laws, in return for which the king

granted to her certain manors and estates in certain counties lately forfeited by the attainder of the earl of Essex and Sir Nicholas Carew . . . . The condition for the grants was that she should never pass beyond the sea during her life.

On the sixth of August, Henry honored her himself with a visit. This was two days before he publicly introduced lovely Catherine Howard to the court as his queen. He was already married to Catherine, no doubt of that. It was reassuring, to his new venture, to take one last look at yesterday's error.

CHAPTER XXV

The Young Wanton

CATHERINE HOWARD was of good blood; of blood at least as good as the king's. She was a cousin of Mary and Anne Boleyn; but, more than this, in her own right she claimed descent from Charlemagne. She traced back to Edward 1st of England and his wife, Margaret of France; she had in her the blood of the Albinis, the Warrens, the Bigods, thus blending in her person the line of Henry 1st and his two queens, Matilda the Good and Adelicia the Fair. John, first Howard duke of Norfolk, fell on Bosworth Field; Thomas, his eldest son, was the Surrey who won Flodden Field; Edmund, ninth son of this Thomas, was the father of Catherine Howard. A near relative, Sir Edward Howard, had been the lord high admiral of England, who had boarded a French galliot alone under the batteries of the bay of Conquet, and had died upon the pikes of the enemy. His will left the gold and jewelled cup of Thomas à Becket to Catherine of Aragon, and his admiral's golden whistle to the king; but in the moment of death he flung this whistle into the waves, that the enemy might not seize it. His brother, Lord Thomas Howard, was lord admiral after him. Sir Thomas had led the English van in Flodden, under his father, earl of Surrey; another son of Surrey, Edmund Howard, also fought valiantly in this conflict, three horses being killed under him. It is of such episodes that Henry the king ordered the chronicles of the time to be filled. It was well, the king ordered, to leave out such matters as what maids had fallen before his assault, and what strange

CATHERINE HOWARD

1540

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery, London

potions of brewed ale had vanquished the noble lords to the bray of belchings.

Flodden over, the Howards rose. Surrey was made duke of Norfolk, Lord Thomas was made earl of Surrey, and the arms of Howard were augmented by the upper half of a red lion, the royal bearing of Scotland, pierced with an arrow.

Sir Edmund was one of the noble bachelors who followed Mary of England in her bridal train to France, along with his own niece, the lovely Mistress Anne Boleyn. He married Joyeuse, or Jocosa, daughter of Sir Richard Culpepper, of Hollingbourne, in Kent, the widow of Sir John Leigh. She bore him three sons, and then three daughters. His fifth child, the daughter Catherine, was born at the earliest toward the end of 1521, or the beginning of 1522. For it was in 1515 that Sir Edmund had squired Mary to France; and after this he married, and got four children before this daughter Catherine. Lambeth, in London, is given as the place of Catherine's birth. Her mother died when she was a mere child; and when the grandfather, Thomas, duke of Norfolk, died, Lord Edmund permitted his step-mother Agnes Tylney, the dowager-duchess, to have entire control of the upbringing of this second daughter and fifth child. He himself was busied with a new bride, Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Lord Troyes; and with his new duties as controller of Calais and its marches.

The dowager-duchess might have been an admirable foster-mother to the little Catherine. She was a beldame of no judgment, a vain, gossipy, weak old woman, with neither prudence nor common sense.

She was a busy woman—busybody might name it better. Constant feuds, degenerating into lawsuits, were her daily fare, with her step-sons, including the present duke, Sir Thomas Howard; which made him hate the

dowager-duchess and all that she had under her wing, including the lovely little Catherine. So busy was the old woman, that Catherine was left entirely to the care of servants and waiting-women. She occupied at night the sleeping apartment common to them all. They were persons whose morality did not differ from that of Henry's court; and persons whose minds are bent on odd pleasures take delight in initiating a young flower into their darker group. It was so with Catherine Howard.

They all had heard magnified whispers of what Clement the Sixth did to the little princess Joanna of Naples. To make sure that the papal see should retain control of this wealthy land, he had overturned the girl's father's will, and had turned the chit over to adept courtesans, sure to spur on to extravagant heights her natural amorousness. Thus the glory of God could be best served . . . . By sixteen, Joanna had been a second Messalina. She was wedded already to Andrew of Hungary; but the pope saw to it that her royal bed was open to her whims. She had filled it with lords of the court, guardsmen, sailors of the port. With her skilled body she so weakened her husband that he could no longer please her; and one morning his body was found outside his bedroom, strangled with a silken cord. She married one of her lovers; became the mistress of the pope, and later of Urban the Fifth, who presented to this queenly courtesan the blessed golden rose; took two more husbands; grew in her excesses; and at last, at the instigation of Urban the Sixth, was strangled with a silken cord by her adopted son and heir, Charles de Duras, after her breasts and her womb had been torn from her living body. Such Joanna had been; why not make Catherine Howard another such?

For she was lovely, this Catherine; and she had already ripened out, child as she was, into the provocative curves of womanhood. She was not yet in her teens; but they told her

all that might heat her fancy, and, with their own play in the shadows of the sleeping apartment, lessoned her further.

Then came one Henry Manox, of no family, a player on the virginals, and, some say, Catherine's instructor on this instrument. She was unripe for full plucking; but she was lovely, highborn, and had been prepared for all that he might whisper with his tongue and touch with his hands. There was one of the dowager-duchess's women, a Mistress Isabel, who busied herself as pander to this delectable romance; she carried the tokens exchanged between Manox and the girl. He was not able to seduce her wholly; she was too young for that. But he had his full pleasure, and thrilled her to dangerous heights, that racked her with unsatisfied longing.

Mistress Isabel married and left the household of the dowager-duchess; her place was taken by a woman from Horsham, named Dorothy Barwike. Soon after the whole establishment moved to Lambeth, to attend the coronation of the old duchess's granddaughter Anne Boleyn. This was 1533 . . . . Here little Catherine formed an intimacy with another woman of low birth, one Mary Lassells, a nurse in her uncle's family. The coronation year Mary Lassells entered into the household of the old duchess, and was permitted to sleep in the dormitory shared by Catherine and the female attendants. The little girl was still under thirteen.

Dorothy Barwike could not contain her tongue. She told the nurse the full details of the intrigue in which she had involved the child. "He's got her, or he'll get her soon. I myself have seen . . . ."

"At her age—"

"I tell you, mistress, Manox is troth-plighted to her already! Ah, he's in love with her, no doubt of it!"

The musician had been seen by Mary Lassells; and not

seen with unfavoring eyes. She took herself to him, in a heat. "Man, why do you play the fool in this fashion? It is one thing to frolic with those in your own condition . . . . Don't you known that, if my lady of Norfolk guessed of the love between you and Mistress Howard, she would undo you? The girl's of a noble house; if you marry her, some of her kinfolk will kill you, as sure as I'm a good woman!"

"Ah, Mary, you're on the wrong road in this matter. Marry her? I mean but to bed her—make her my thing. Oh, she's let me go so far already, I'll have her utterly, soon enough. Why, only last night . . . ."

Mary Lassells took this straight to Catherine Howard.

The girl was furious. "Fie upon him! I care not for him. Where is the villian?"

He was not to be found. Some said he was at the king's palace; some, at Lord Beaumont's. Here Catherine and the nurse went first; here they found him. She cornered him at once. "You talk of me in this fashion! Never in my life did I dream of such a base soul—you, who have so often told me—"

"Peace, peace, darling. I'm mad with love of you; you know that. My love madness has confounded my reason; I can not even dream what I said, in my madness."

With heavy heart and hanging head she left him. She was seen with him only once afterwards, walking at the back of the duchess's orchard at Lambeth. He was seen more often with Mary Lassells.

There were other men who saw her with favor. The duke of Norfolk, her uncle, retained in his train a band of gentlemen, whom he called his pensioners, or household troop. They had, as a rule, good birth, and less fortune; many were kin to their lords. They were ready to follow him to battle, to shield him in his quarrels with his neighbors, or even, if need arose, to aid him against his king. They had

free quarters, good pay, and little to do, but in unusual cases, except to amuse themselves. One of these picaroons, named Francis Derham, saw Mistress Catherine Howard, and proceeded to amuse himself, with the aid of the lovely body of the girl.

Norfolk had these gentleman-pensioners, and so had Northumberland. They were the last vestige of the old feudal retainers. They were expected to be persons of bravery and address; a mere matter of morals was unimportant, in such cases. Derham was a relative of the Howards; he even had a small smattering of property. He saw Catherine, wanted her, and proceeded to take her.

His first problem was how to obtain access to her. He tried out the women who were her intimates—the serving women. They had opened the gates to Manox; they flung them wider to Derham. One thing that contributed to the ease of her yielding was the fact that the stingy old duchess kept her without money. Catherine was a girl—a little girl; she wanted finery of all sorts; it took money to get this. At this moment she longed for an artificial flower, called a French fennel, which all the ladies of Harry's court were wearing. Derham learned of this wish.

"I know a little woman with a crooked back, in London, who is most skilled of all the women in the world of making such flowers, Catherine dear."

"I'm wild for one, Francis. If you could only beg her to make one for me—"

"I'd do anything I could for you. I'll gladly pay—"

"Oh, you must let me pay you back—as soon as I can get some money, that is."

"Of course, you darling. There'll be no delay," with a reassuring squeeze of her girl's body against his own.

He brought it soon enough. The little girl was overjoyed; but how could she dare wear it, without exciting

questions? She plotted and contrived, and at length persuaded Lady Brereton to say that she had given it to the girl. And she owed Derham for this . . . .

There were silks, satins, velvets, that the little girl's heart craved . . . . Derham always to the rescue, only too glad to get the girl deeply in his debt. The money that she owed mounted constantly.

New Year's Day—and they exchanged love-tokens. He gave her a silk heart's ease, and she gave him a band and sleeves for a shirt, curiously wrought with the needle, in Catherine's own hand. One day they were tussling, and he took from her a bracelet of silken work, over her protests, and kept it. There was also a little ruby ring that he showed to the other gentlemen pensioners. "From the little wanton," he boasted.

"I warrant you've taken more than a ring from her."

"Not for me to tell; but I've left nothing for another man to take," with a pleased smirk.

He even gave to her an old shirt, of fine Holland cambric, belonging to the dead Lord Thomas Howard, which the duchess had given to him. It was costly with point and fine needlework; and the little girl used all her ingenuity to convert it into handkerchiefs, and other little accessories to her wardrobe.

She needed all these little things; the old duchess, her great relatives, gave her none of them; Francis Derham gave them to her. What if she had the blood of the Plantagenets and the Carlovingians in her veins? Here was a man who gave her what she wanted; and, in return, she pledged her troth to him, and gave him earnest of the future.

"Such a troth is binding, darling," he reminded her.

"Well do I know it; and I will never want other man."

"You could not have another. The church would for-

bid. It would prevent another marriage, or void one, if made."

"Which is why my heart is singing now, Francis."

"I'm to call you wife, then, and you're to call me husband?"

"Oh, I'm very content that it be so."

There were others present, at times, when he bussed and handled her.

One of the pensioners took him to task, in her presence. "Why do you take such liberties with the young lady?"

"Who's to hinder me from kissing my own wife?" he countered.

"That's what I've heard," said another. "It'll come to pass, no doubt of that."

"Meaning what?" queried the first.

"Why, marry, that Master Derham will have Mistress Catherine."

"By St. John," said the pleased lover, "you may guess twice, and guess worse."

The only care the old duchess took over her ward was to have the doors of the chamber in which she and the attendant women slept locked every night, and the keys brought to her. Too simple . . . . another attendant stole away the keys, and Derham was admitted night after night, to say and do what had to be said and done in private with the little girl.

"He's very kind to me," Catherine confided to one of the women. "He brings me strawberries, apples, wine and other gifts, to make cheer with me, after my lady is abed."

"You make away with the keys yourself?"

"That I have never done. But the doors are opened, for this cause or that, and Francis has come at all hours of the night, even almost to morning."

"I suppose you two only talk, you fine piece?" A trace of envy in the tone.

Catherine giggled. "Of course. No, by my holiness, he is a rogue. He has often scandalously misbehaved himself with me. Of course, I didn't consent, any of the times—"

"But you liked it?"

An enigmatic smile.

Wilks and Baskerville, two of the woman attendants, were troubled for fear the old duchess might come in some night.

"Easy enough," said Derham. "I'll slip into the little gallery, if she comes, and wait until she departs. Waiting makes the viand spicier."

All laughed at this; but more than once he had to act upon the suggestion. He was always bringing gifts. Once it was some sarcenet that she needed to make a quilted cap. She took it to an embroiderer, Rose, who did it with friar's knots, which Derham boasted were put on for him. For Francis of France had brought in the habit of these little ornaments, to stand for Francis; and now another Francis claimed them. Again, there was a silk pansy that he brought her. He gave all of his money into her keeping; and once, when he had to set out on a journey, he turned over to her to keep an indenture, showing a debt to him of a hundred pounds, which, if he never returned, she was to have as her own.

He would not tell her where he was going. Whether it was piracy, as many said, she never knew. He went, and after a space he returned. He was always jealous of her, and especially of her going to court. For he felt that his hold upon her was slight, and he did not wish to lose her.

"But I must go, Francis. I'm old enough—"

"I know the men about court, Catherine dear. You must not; you would become a light of love. I forbid it!"

"I will go, Master Francis, so there!"

He turned paler. "I'll not tarry long in this house, then."

She turned pettishly away. "That is as you will."

He had already left Norfolk's train, and was serving as page or gentleman-usher to the old duchess, to be near the soiled little flower. The old duchess was not blind; she began to sense what was going on. "Where's Derham? Where's Francis Derham?" she would repeat, with a bitter inflection. "Not in my broidery-bag. Look in the maids' chamber; look where Mistress Catherine is . . . ."

In the maids' chamber the embroidering, tapestry work, and spinning took place. Here one day, in this room sacred to the women, she not only found Derham, but found him romping with the panting little kinswoman.

"You naughty things!" She had a demon's temper. She flew at Derham, and beat him soundly with both fists. She turned impetuously on Catherine, and soon had her crying from the blows. Panting, not sated, she turned on Mistress Bulmer, and boxed her ears for sitting by and permitting such familiarity. "This is not Henry's court," she said bitterly. "I will not have such goings on in my house . . . ."

Yet she kept Derham in her employ; and the most she did to Catherine was to chide her constantly, or to beat her on occasion.

And then word came to her that she could not ignore. Francis Derham and Catherine Howard were lovers—had been for a long time. They spoke of marriage; and, meanwhile, they played at all manner of love-making, night after night.

The grim old termagant went white with fury. "I'll show the froward bitch what's what in my house!" Down in a wild skurry to the maids' room, where she beat and thrashed the quivering girl until her body was a mass of

bruises. Silly way of punishing for what her own lack of care had caused . . . .

Where was Derham, then? There were Howard swords ready to end him. He got word of the storm in time, and fled to Ireland. Here, word came back, he had become a pirate.

One snatched farewell meeting, one wild abandoned caress, and she said, looking him in the face, with tears streaming down her face, "You will never live to say to me, 'You have swerved from your love.' "

Well, time now, considered the old duchess, to clean house—to lock the stable door. What if the stallion had escaped; what if the trouble had been made? Out, bag and baggage, with the women who had started Catherine in her looseness, and had pandered to the desires of Manox, Derham, and perhaps others. She was strictly watched, henceforth. But there was a maid in the house, named Jane Acworth, whom Catherine bribed to carry on a secret correspondence still with Derham. Catherine called this woman her secretary. Soon enough Jane married a man named Bulmer, and moved to York; which left Catherine lonely in the midst of denying virtue. She had grown older; denial had soothed her storming desires; she grew more and more modest and retiring, as was expected of maidens of the day.

Derham came back from Ireland, and sent word to Catherine.

No, she would have no words with him. That was dead and gone . . . .

He never recovered from his desire for her. A marriage was being reported between Catherine and her kinsman Thomas Culpepper. "Is he the cause of your coldness? Are you to be married to him, as I hear?" he demanded stormily of her.

"Why should you trouble me? You know I will not have you," she faced him down. "If you heard such a tale, you know more of it than I do."

Disconsolately at length he returned to Ireland, leaving her to the tepid wooing of this first-cousin, and to the danger of the courtiers around the throne. Neither of them thought that the wooing might come from higher yet.

CHAPTER XXVI

A Wanton as Queen

THE exact date of Catherine's first appearance at court is not known. But it was at a banquet given by the bishop of Winchester to his royal master, soon after the king's marriage to the brood mare from Flanders, that she first conquered the royal passion.

Gardiner, son of a cloth merchant of Bury St. Edmunds, bishop of Winchester now, and chancellor of the university of Cambridge, who held the king's ear, noted the royal fondness for the niece of his patron, the duke of Norfolk, and saw to it that Henry had ample chance to know Catherine, in his own house. She was still a child in appearance: exquisite, graceful, and fairy-like of body. By midsummer, every tongue in England wagged with the new gossip: the king was going to marry the very little girl, a Mistress Howard; he was conducting an affair with this maiden, still in her teens. . . . .

She was named as a maid of honor to Anne of Cleves, which brought her nearer to the royal chambers. The king was in her presence as much as he could be, both in affairs of state and in his hours of relaxation. But she was discreet—she had learned that much. Cromwell hated her influence, which went with Gardiner and her uncle Norfolk, and spoke against her to Henry, advising him never to make her his queen. How talk politics to an infatuated prematurely old man? It was whispered that she herself persuaded the king to sign the death warrant for his former minister; but the wiser heads about court doubted this.

Derham had disappeared. Best let him lie wherever he was. Catherine breathed freer, with him away; she never mentioned him. The old dowager-duchess was ever indiscreet in her talk. "What's become of that Francis Derham?" she would constantly inquire.

"Madam, no one of us knows."

"Pish, ask Catherine Howard. She'll know, if any do . . . . ."

Catherine, a maid of honor now, came to visit her old grandmother. The dowager-duchess could not be hushed. "D'you know, Catherine, where that Francis Derham is?"

"I have no idea whatever, madam."

Marillac kept the French king informed of all that went on.

> Now it is said that the king is going to marry a lady of great beauty, daughter to a deceased brother of the duke of Norfolk. It is even said that the marriage has already taken place, but is kept secret. I cannot tell how far it is true.

To the constable Montmorenci, on the same date, Marillac wrote:

> I have heard that the lady is not only married to the king, but is likely to bring him a family.

Well, the old dowager-duchess might gossip, but she saw her advancement in her granddaughter's royal favor, and did all that she could to further the match. What had happened with Derham was three years dead, when the girl was fifteen at oldest; she was only eighteen now—quite a mate for the old monarch. Word of the putting by of the fourth queen, followed by the rumor that Catherine would be the fifth, covered England. It woke trouble for the little girl.

Here's a letter from Jane Bulmer, one of the woman

attendants, to little Catherine. She spoke of Catherine's impending good fortune, and of her own misery and wretchedness. Would Catherine make it possible for Mistress Bulmer to come to London? Would she arrange a room near the girl's own room, to let Mistress Bulmer keep close to her former protégée? More she could write, she says, but she will not; ending "I know the queen of England will not forget her secretary."

One by one the other spectres of the past came out of their low haunts, and began to trouble the girl. She could have gotten rid of them, by confessing her early yielding to passion's importunity; or she could keep silent, become queen, and trust to smother the past by future favors. She chose this more perilous road.

Derham was still hidden. But he said to a comrade, when he heard what was toward at court, "I could be sure now of Mistress Howard, if I would, but I dare not. The king begins to love her; but if he were dead, I am sure I could marry her."

Public announcement of the dissolution of Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves . . . . A humble petition from Parliament, begging his majesty "for the good of his people, to venture on a fifth marriage, in the hope that God would bless him with a more numerous issue."

He was released; and, within a few days, perhaps within a few hours, of the announcement, he was privately married to the little maid of honor. There was a song in the air:

Crabbed Age and Youth
Cannot live together;
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter weather;
Youth like summer brave,

Age like winter bare . . . .
Age, I do abhor thee;
Youth, I do adore thee!
O! my love, my love is young!
Age, I do defy thee—
O sweet shepherd, hie thee,
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

But this tune was not heard in the court. Pleasance enough in the amorous Bluebeard; and the young maid quick to take to her bruised breasts one who was a connoisseur in bedding beauties.

On the 8th of August, 1540, Catherine Howard was introduced by Henry at Hampton Court as his queen. On that day she took her seat at chapel, in the royal closet by Henry's side. Afterward, they dined together in public; and Catherine the queen placed the young princess Elizabeth, her step-daughter by her cousin Anne Boleyn, opposite to herself at table. On the 15th of the month, all England prayed publicly for the new queen. She had need of their prayers soon enough . . . .

Catherine the queen and Anne Boleyn had been first-cousins. Another incestuous marriage . . . . needing a dispensation from the pope. But Henry was now the English pope, in effect at least; and so this was glossed over, especially since foresighted Henry had had Parliament pass an act, legalizing marriages within this relationship—having Mistress Catherine in mind when he did it.

Within a few days, the royal lovers moved to Windsor, where they remained until the 22nd of August. They were royal lovers, no doubt of that. Catherine was shaped for love. The graphorrhaic Marillac might understate her beauties to his master, Francis:

> The new queen is a young lady of moderate beauty, but superlative grace. In stature she is small and slender. Her countenance is very delightful, of

> which the king is so greatly enamoured, that he knows not how to make sufficient demonstrations of his affection for her, and very far exceeds the caresses he ever bestowed on the others. She is dressed after the French fashion like all the other ladies of this court, and bears for her device round her arms, 'No other will than his.' "

Moderate beauty? Good thing for Monsieur Marillac that this did not reach Henry's eyes: heads had fallen for less, wars been engendered for far less. She was in her teens, fair, blooming, with great laughing blue eyes and frolicking brown hair, restrained to Madonna-like simplicity by its formal bands. Her nose was tipped adorably upward; her lips were full, red, insistent on kissing. Her bodice as a rule was worn high, tight, close-fitting; and out of it her breasts swelled and burst upward, a ravishing promise of the charms below. Before the court, Henry could not keep his amorous hands off her; and, with the court away . . . . She had other charms, he winked in private to his intimates . . . . hot, infuriating devices, maddeningly precious tricks of love.

"No other will than his" . . . . Forever buried those panting hours when she had been at the prone mercy of the unbridled will of Manox, of Derham, of the riff-raff around the old dowager-duchess's palace.

They left Windsor together, and made a little progress to Reading, Ewelm, Rycott, Notley, Buckingham, Grafton. Grafton was reached on the 29th of the month; here they remained till the 7th of September. There was little public pomp in all this; Henry wanted the hour to revel in the tropic charms of the little wanton.

Soon enough she learned that the past was not buried, but stalked unseen at her tiny elbow. The day before they reached Grafton, the attention of the privy council was

called to the fact that a certain priest at Windsor, and certain of his fellows, were accused of unbefitting words concerning the queen; for which the whole kit of them had been arrested. The priest was put into Master Wriothesley's hands; the others were celled in the keep of Windsor Castle.

Word of this came to the little queen. Her face paled, her lips tightened; she opened her wide eyes invitingly to the vast king. Word of it came to him; he thought of her face, of her beauty, and laughed unbelievingly. The priest was told to bridle his tongue to its proper concerns; his informant was kept confined. The past was buried again . . . .

From Grafton the court removed to Ampthill. Here the king found it necessary to discipline sixteen of his attendants, toward more decorum. And here, wordlessly, the past stalked at the queen's tiny elbow, in living persons. Here was Jane Bulmer, one of her bedchamber women now . . . . Jane, the former secretary of the little Howard girl. She looked quietly at Catherine, and in her gaze Catherine saw a full picture of a tiny girl's rumpled attire and rumpled chastity, of her stained bed and stained honor. In Jane's eyes she saw the swaggering gallantry of the desirous gentleman pensioner Francis Derham, the fugitive to Ireland, the pirate abroad, the pirate night after night in her own bedchamber. In Jane's eyes she saw earlier, more dreadful things reliving.

Here too was Katherine Tylney, who knew as well as Jane, or better, what Derham, Manox, and other men had done to the little girl, now queen; and what the waiting women had done to her, in miring her soul and waking her body to April passion.

Here, too, among the royal musicians, was Henry Manox, still playing upon the virginals, as he had once

played upon this little virgin. He had never even had marriage in his mind; he had sought only to muddy the white petals, to tear open the bud for his private rut . . . . This he had done. Every sight of him brought up to the little queen the torrid memories of swift passionate hours in his teasing arms, of things that words of hers could not say, that might send her as Anne her cousin had gone, if once they bored into the king's dulled hearing.

She kept it dulled. She exerted all of her scintillant charm, to madden the old rake. So enamoured did he become, that at Ampthill, and later at More Park in Hertfordshire, Henry gave orders that no member even of the royal household should trouble him in person with any grievance, but that all must be scribed in writing and presented formally to the council.

Back to Windsor, two months after they had quit it. A new story sweeping the court like forest fire: Anne the former queen was in a family way; Henry was to put by this Howard flower, and take the Flemish mare to his stallion's side again . . . .

Rumor merely. A mere indisposition, needing no midwife.

The court moved from place to place, Henry often dispensing even with the presence of his council, to have his bride alone in his arms day and night. Six months after the marriage, Henry went alone for ten days to London on business. A stirring uxorious spring and summer at Greenwich and Eltham, or in progress through Kent, Essex, and the midland counties. Catherine at first had been under the thumb of Gardiner and her uncle Norfolk. This nobleman had no tact; he was forever squabbling with his wife, his sister, his daughter, and his step-mother, the old dowager-duchess. This lady knew too much about the little queen for Catherine to alienate her. She turned instead against

Norfolk. The hour came soon when she needed his shielding arm. She had forfeited it already.

England was a football, tugged over by the rival parties of Catholics and Protestants. It had been so when Catherine the Catholic of Aragon had been put by for Anne Boleyn, the Protestant. It was so still, with Anne of Cleves, the Protestant, put by for Catherine Howard, the Catholic. The duke of Cleves believed that the fall of Catherine Howard would mean the reëstablishment of his sister. And so Catherine Howard had to fall . . . .

Yorkshire, in the spring, saw a Catholic uprising, under Sir John Neville. Henry blamed this on the absent Cardinal Pole; and now sent his old mother, the countess of Salisbury, to the block. She was the last of the Plantagenets: of this royal blood, she disdained to lay her head upon the block. "So should traitors do," she said proudly. "I am none. If you will have my head, you must win it as you can." Tumult and riot on Tower Hill, the burly executioner in the end dragging the old countess by her whitening hair to the block, where he butchered her.

Nothing in all this to endear the Catholics to Henry, for all of his fondness for his wife. When the royal pair proceeded into Yorkshire, he left the Protestants at the helm—Cranmer, Audley the lord chancellor, Seymour, earl of Hertford, brother of the late queen Jane. Grafton, Northampton, Lincolnshire, and so to York . . . . A little splendor, a withering breath of terror accompanying the royal butcher. Here was the wrath of God, bodied in this burly king, ready to scorch the offending counties. Out came all the townsmen of Lincolnshire, gold in their hands, hoping this Midas flood would dull royal ire against them. Gold sufficed, with the quieting words and the maddening touch of the little Catholic queen at his side. In Yorkshire, two hundred gentlemen of the shire, in coats of velvet, with

four thousand tall yeomen and serving men, bowed knees to the royal pair, made submission through Sir Robert Bowes, and gave the king nine hundred pounds. His treasury was low indeed; this was a true expression of a contrite heart, he decided. Another pageant, led by the archbishop of York, with more than three hundred ecclesiastics and their attendants, who met the king on Barnesdale, and made their submission with a gift of six hundred pounds. The mayors of York, of Newcastle, of Hull, each submitted with a gift of a hundred pounds.

And so to Pontefract castle. Here the little Catholic queen added to her household, as a gentleman in waiting and private secretary to herself, a relative of Norfolk's. The duchess of Norfolk herself introduced this gentleman into her granddaughter's court . . . . the old dowager-duchess, that is. He made the request suavely, slily, looking the withered old woman straight in the face as he did so. Her eyes dropped; and she recommended his suit. He appeared before the tiny queen, and made the request more boldly, more arrogantly, this time. His eyes held Catherine's as a basilisk holds its prey: she stared at him in dreadful fascination, and felt, in his hot gaze, her garments slowly seared off her, the years pruned away, and her stripped body tight in the clench of his rigidly controlled arms. She bowed, burned back into an old passion, chilled into a dreadful fear. She took him into her court. His name was Francis Derham.

This was the 27th of August, 1541. She had been married for upward of a year now. Two days later, she again displayed a queenly lack of discretion. She admitted her cousin, Thomas Culpepper, into her closet or privy chamber at Lincoln at eleven at night, no one being present but the asp-tongued Lady Rochford, her chief lady in waiting. For many hours the two were together; and at

his departure the queen presented him with a chain and a rich cap. Gossip had it at once that, during these blank night hours, she had given him more than this; and more than a wife should to one not the spouse of her bosom. Yet Derham, her bedmate of old, was close, and was arrogantly jealous; the wise men of the court say that nothing but words and the gifts passed on this occasion. Others spoke of other gifts.

On the 14th of September, York was reached; and here the royal lovers tarried twelve days. Here they were to meet with the king's nephew, James V of Scotland. Henry had certain plans in his mind, as to this meeting . . . . He remembered how Scotland had treated him, not in the ancient past either.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Blow Falls

MARGARET TUDOR, Henry's sister, who had been wedded to James IV of Scotland, had been a sore thorn in her brother's side; for she was as tempestuously amorous as he had been, for all that she was woman, and he man. After her Scottish husband's death, she had married the earl of Angus, the head of the house of Douglas; she had next become the mistress, so the tale went, of the governor of Scotland, John, duke of Albany, first cousin of her first husband; for which Henry openly charged Albany with

> damnably abusing our sister and inciting her to be divorced from her husband, the earl of Angus, with what corrupt intent God knows!

Margaret at last secured her divorce, and married, not Albany, but Henry Stewart, second son of Lord Evandale, a soldier of fortune—"foolish and evil conduct" which further upset Henry. After Stewart had been named earl of Methven, Margaret had tired of him, discovered a remote kinship between him and Angus, and had divorced him, to marry the earl of Arran. This James V, her son, prevented, while the infuriated mother wailed to her brother in England, the king, "I had liefer be dead!" A pox on such hot old wenches!

Then there was Margaret Douglas, King Henry's niece, Margaret Tudor's daughter by her second husband, Angus. She had been spirited out of troubled Scotland, had joined the court of Catherine of Aragon, had been transferred to Anne Boleyn's court, and had here had her first

love affair, with the queen's uncle, Lord Thomas Howard. When Anne fell, and the little princess Elizabeth joined Mary in the outer shade of legalized bastards of the king, Lady Margaret Douglas suddenly found herself first lady of the blood-royal of England, and heir-presumptive to the throne. Henry had acted promptly. Anne Boleyn was kin to the Howards; it would not do to let another of the family soar so high. So Lord Thomas was carted off to the Tower, and impeached—

> as having been led and seduced by the Devil, not having God before his eyes . . . . he had contemptuously, craftily and traitorously contracted himself, by fair and flattering words, to and with the Lady Margaret Douglas, by which it is to be suspected that the said Lord Thomas Howard . . . . hath imagined and compassed that, in case our said Sovereign Lord should die, without heirs of his body (which God defend!), then the said Lord Thomas . . . . by reason of marriage in so high a blood, should aspire by her to the imperial crown.

Parliament—Henry's cringing Parliament—posted to the king with a humble petition, that he deem this offense high treason. Henry graciously gave his assent. Lord Thomas was left to die in the Tower. Lady Margaret, after brief imprisoment, was released, to serve as lady-in-waiting to Henry's yearly queens.

Henry had scored a point, when the impeachment of Lord Thomas Howard had held that, to fall in love with a Scottish maiden, the Devil must be to blame. Word sifted up to Scotland of what came during Anne Boleyn's reign, and after: how Mary the king's daughter had been bastardized, and her mother put away; how Elizabeth, the king's daughter, had been badged with the same sinister bar, and her mother beheaded; how Henry was abolishing abbeys

and religious houses at his sweet lust. Henry had prated of the Devil, had he, in speech of Margaret Douglas's lover? Fling it back in his decaying Tudor teeth! The Scottish priests, in the border districts, lifted up their voices in a sulphurous Great Cursing; against all who offended the church . . . .

> I curse their head and all the hairs of their head. I curse their face, their eyes, their mouth, their nose, their tongue, their teeth, their shoulders, their back, and their heart, their arms, their legs, their hands, their feet, and every part of their body from the top of their head to the soles of their feet, before and behind, within and without . . . .
>
> I curse them walking and I curse them riding. I curse them eating and I curse them drinking. I curse them within the house and I curse them without the house. I curse their wives, their bairns, and their servants . . . .
>
> I curse their cattle, their wool, their sheep, their horses, their swine, their geese, and their hens. I curse their halls, their chambers, their stables, and their barns . . . .
>
> The fire and the sword that stopped Adam from the gates of Paradise shall bar them from the glory of heaven until they forbear and make amends . . . . I dissever and part them from the Church of God and deliver them quick to the Devil of Hell . . . .
>
> As these candles go from your sight, so may their souls go from the sight of God and their frame from the world until they forbear their sins and rise from this terrible curse to make satisfaction and do penance.

Pope Clement more than ratified this cursing, by appealing against the "king of England, excommunicated heretic, schismatic, manifest adulterer, public murderer," and prom-

ising Henry's kingdom to those priests who should assist the pope in the recovery of the realm. Irky, murky place, this Scotland, Henry reflected.

His nephew James, who had sought to marry his already married first love, who had taken Marie de Longueville from under the English monarch's very nose, whose two children by Marie had died within a few hours of each other,—this James too was a trouble-maker. So now that Henry and his adored Catherine Howard approached York, the English king summoned his Scottish nephew to cross the marches and meet him; hinting that England's crown might round Scottish brows, should Edward, Henry's son, die without heirs of the body.

The royal northern mouse sniffed at the cheese, twitched his young whiskers, posted away with his wife Marie on a pilgrimage to Musselburgh, hoping for a third child. Henry was left to nurse his anger; to plan war against Scotland; to seize Scottish ships; to send Norfolk, the scourge of Scotland, northward; to publish a manifesto. Marie took to her chamber again. Norfolk retreated, baffled by the chill northern winter. James planned to invade England, provoked a sudden rebellion by naming a disliked favorite to the command, and, in the disorder, suffered the disgraceful defeat of Solway Moss. Word came that Marie had borne another child, "a fair daughter" . . . . Mary Stuart. She became queen of Scotland eight days later, when nephew James suddenly died, uttering oracularly the old proverb, "It came with a lass, and it will pass with a lass." For Marjorie Bruce, long before, had brought the crown to the house of Stuart; and now, another lass . . . .

But Henry, for the while, had ceased to trouble himself about northern neighbors. There was trouble nearer home. From York the royal lovers had progressed to Holme, to

Hull, across Humber and through Lincolnshire. Each day the king's caresses increased in abandon; and this meant, to the Protestant party, a growing cloud of Catholic menace. In the spring before, Sir John Gorstwick had denounced Cranmer, in open parliament, as the root of all heresies. Now the royal lovers spent a night at the house of Sir John. There was, too, a culled meeting of the privy council, held in Gorstwick's house, with Gardiner presiding. Cranmer studied all this; remembered where Cromwell's body lay; and determined that the moment had come to strike, if he were to save his own head from the block.

In went the archbishop to his colleagues, the earl of Hertford and the lord chancellor. "My lords," he said quietly, "I have a matter to bare before you." Out it all came—hot on Cranmer's tongue from the mouth of John Lassells, brother of the nurse, Mary Lassells, who had known of and aided Catherine's early tutelage in love at the hands of Henry Manox, and her later yielding to Francis Derham.

"How did you learn this, my lord?" from the chancellor.

Cranmer shrugged. "I have known it long; but out of pity I withheld it. It came to me from the Lassells woman's brother. He had it from his sister, whom he had sued to find herself a place in the queen's household. 'I would not enter into the service of the queen,' said the nurse to her brother, 'but I pity her.' 'Pity the queen? What talk is this?' 'I pity her, because she is light, both in conditions and living.' She went on to tell the whole tale to her brother: what Manox had done; how Derham had bussed and cosseted the young maid in secret places, had bedded her before troth-plight, had plighted her after, and had had his sweet fill of all of her young body night after night. This and much more

I had from the man. What think you we should do, if this be true?"

Hertford and the chancellor stared forth from the window. The old leaves were still greatly green on the oaks; there was an October glint of blood on the young maples. They had seen blood on young life before . . . . The queen was young. Yet, if this were unbosomed to the king, there would be more young blood darkening the soil of a land too dark already. Man, the beast that rends his fellows . . . . Well, their own heads were not safe, if this were closeted longer. The king must be told.

"Lay it before the king, your grace; and be yours the tongue to tell him."

On the 26th of October, the king and queen arrived at Windsor. On the 30th they proceeded to Hampton Court, to keep the festival of All Saints. On this day Henry and Catherine took the sacrament together. Henry, on his knees before the altar, lifted his eyes up toward the English god, and exclaimed aloud, "I render thanks to thee, O Lord, that after so many strange accidents that have befallen my marriages, thou hast been pleased to give me a wife so entirely conformed to my inclinations, as her that I now have."

He turned to his confessor, the bishop of Lincoln. "To-morrow is All Souls' Day. Prepare, against that time, a public acknowledgement of thanksgiving to God, for his having blessed me with so loving, dutiful, and virtuous a queen."

The bishop bowed. The morrow came. Henry went alone into the royal closet, for his morning chat with his partner, the English God, at the mass. A man stepped quietly up to him, holding out a paper. It was Cranmer, the archbishop.

"Good morrow, sire."

"And to you."

"I beseech your royal highness to read over this writing —humbly beseeching that your highness may read it only in entire privacy."

Henry, curious at the reined-in soberness of the other's face, took it aside and read it.

He called Cranmer before him. "This sheet," slapping it a blow with his swollen fingers, "is all a mess of lies, designed to destroy her majesty my queen."

"But, sire—"

"I tell you, it *must* be so! I love her so tenderly, I have built me such a sure faith in her honesty, that it must be a forged matter, and no truth."

"Sire, it is true. If you have doubt of it . . . ."

Henry, still unbelieving, sent for his intimates. Here's the lord privy seal tiptoeing obsequiously in; here's the lord admiral, and Sir Anthony Browne, and the pliable Wriothesley.

The king stood, back to them, pressing his thumbs and forefingers into his bloated haunches. He had bared his will to them often before; but never on matter as dark as this. If a man wished to be rid of a wife he did not like, it was one thing to lift the skirts from her shame, and uncover her naked dishonor to the world. But this was a queen—a woman—a girl that he adored. And now he had to befoul her in their minds, no matter which way the dark hare truth might wind and course . . . .

"There is this paper," he said heavily at last to them, "that has been opened unto me. It holds tale of certain alleged misconducts of Catherine my queen. I can not believe the least of these tales true; and yet the information has been laid, and I can not rest satisfied until the certainty is known. But I warn you," and he turned his pudgy great-

ness against them with a bull's lowering stare, "I would not have, in the searching out of this matter, any spark of scandal arise against my queen."

They bowed, one and all.

The king turned more quietly to the lord privy seal. "Do you to London, where this vile Lassells in encelled, and probe out if he will stand to his saying here. And do the rest of you search into this matter . . . ."

It did not take long to ascertain that the queen had let the two men accused most strongly, Manox and Derham, join her royal household. "She will not have her vicars far from her body," said one councillor to another, in troubled wise.

The lord privy seal returned. The man Lassells had retold his tale. He had said that he had rather die telling this truth, than live hiding it, since it touched the king so nearly.

Mary Lassells, the nurse who had been in at the start of the chase after the little girl, and had seen the quarry fall before the leaping desires of Manox and Derham, was called upon to tell her story. This she told, and that she told, in good hard English talk, that could not be writ down in the chronicles, but in altered words. For the people ever call a whore a whore, and they have no Latin name for dung: and it was these words and harsher ones that she spewed forth.

Henry took it all, his vast face impassive as God's sky face, when mad priests scream their bludgeoning words against his deaf ears. He spoke at last; to Wriothesley, first. "Take this Francis Derham into custody, as a pirate; he was noted before, in Ireland, for that offense. Let no breath of this scandal get about, until you have him in hand. I have somewhat to say to him, myself."

He was apprehended.

Another word came to the king. The old dowager-duchess of Norfolk had said aloud, to another gentlewoman, in the queen's chamber,—pointing to Derham with her quivering old finger, "There, this is he who fled into Ireland for the queen's sake." The old chatterbox spilling out the whole matter at last . . . .

Derham was questioned sternly as to his whole connection with the queen.

"I have naught to hide," he answered them straightly. "A promise of marriage was exchanged between me and the queen, many years before her union to the king. I lived with her as man and wife while I served her grandmother, the duchess of Norfolk. All of the servants there knew we were so to each other."

"You lived, you say, as man and wife?"

"Ay. She was wont to call me her husband, I to call her my wife."

"Before witnesses?"

He bowed. "Before witnesses."

"What more passed between you?"

He considered this thoughtfully. "There were certain gifts and love-tokens—many of them. I gave her monies, whenever I had them."

The subtle examiner proceeding quietly. "And this has continued down to this present?"

A flash of anger from the accused man. "But not so! Not once, since her marriage with the king, has there been the slightest familiarity between us."

"Do not lie, in this solemn moment!"

"May my mother's soul blister in hell, if I speak not the utter truth!"

The fist of the examiner, crashing down on the table a few inches from the prisoner's whitening face. "You lie

to your belly, and I'll prove it on you! To the torture with him!"

There was running here and there of servants and attendants, and the making ready of the torture chamber; there were busy tearing and rending hours, with a moaning man sweating blood at the kiss of iron and the embrace of fire. But from this story Francis Derham would not depart. Nothing, since the king's marriage . . . .

Now to take word of all this to the king.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Catherine at Bay

HENRY had been sure, all the while, that Francis Derham would deny this impossible story, even when the torture was put to him. When the questioners came before him, his face lighted: here would be an end to this bother against the lovely queen.

They started to speak. The import of what they were saying reached him at once. He sought to school his face into marble; instead, it writhed, as if he had been spear-pricked to the heart. Until they ended, he seemed as if about to die of his anguish.

He opened his mouth to speak, at the end. Words could not come. His pride crumbled, his firmness melted away, he burst into a passion of great weeping. He went to his chamber alone, and would see no one.

In the morning, he left Hampton Court, with no word to the queen, in person or by messenger. On that day the council filed in before her, and opened before her the charges that had been laid against her.

She stood, white and straight, before them—a tiny girl still, with all the blackness their wits could devise in words flung against her honor.

"It is a lie," she said, in quiet horror. "It is all a lie."

She would say no more.

The moment they left her, her restraint gave way, and she fell into tempests of passion so violent, that her life and her reason were held to be in danger all that night.

This too was brought to Henry. Out of his guile he sent her word by Cranmer, "Madam, if you will acknowl-

edge your faults, the king, though your life has been forfeited by law, has determined to extend to you his most gracious mercy."

When the archbishop entered, he had found the queen still frantic with agony. She heard the king's words, and her heart softened. She could not speak; but her face, and her uplifted hands, spoke her thankfulness.

She could not speak; and so Cranmer departed, to return again in the evening. She promised him to reply to his questions as truly and faithfully as she would answer God's own tongue at the day of judgment. This was sworn, on the promise which she had made at her baptism, and by the very body and blood of Christ's self, which she had eaten and drunk on All Hallows' Day last past.

Cranmer wrote all the details of the interview to Henry. She had been in a frenzy when he saw her first; she was hardly recovered of it, when he came to her in the evening. She would quiet to mere sobbing and weeping, and then fall into a newer, wilder frenzy than before. She tempered down, and spoke feelingly of her regret at what she had done to his kindly majesty. Then at six at night she fell into another fit, when she remembered that this was the hour at which Master Heneage was accustomed to bring her news of the king. He enclosed, Cranmer wrote, all that he could get out of her, seeking to establish a previous contract of marriage with Derham; which the archbishop held probably sufficient to prove a contract, although he had hoped for more, and although Catherine vehemently denied that any contract had taken place. She insisted that Derham had used against her "importune-force," and had not her free will and consent.

Catherine thus denied, Henry saw at once, that precontract with Derham which the words of all established.

Headstrong little wanton, she wished to hold on to her vanished queenly state, even at hazard of her head.

Henry read again the words of Catherine his queen, forwarded by the archbishop:

> First, I do say that Derham hath many times moved me unto the question of matrimony, whereunto, as far as I remember, I never granted him more than I have confessed. As for those words, "I do promise that I love you with all my heart," I do not remember that I ever spoke them. But as concerning the other words, that "I should promise him by my faith and troth," I am sure I never spoke them.

"Lying little bitch—giving away her head for a lying scruple!"

> Did I call him husband, and he call me wife? There was talk in the house that we two should marry together, and some of his enemies envied him for that. So he desired me to give him leave to call me wife, and that I would call him husband; and I said, "I am content." After that he commonly called me wife, and many times I called him husband, and he used many times to kiss me.

At this, Henry ground the paper in his agitated fist. To lip a wanton like that, and hold her chaste! Henry paced back and forth in the chamber room of the nearby palace of Oatlands, where he had withdrawn to await the result of the inquisition. He must save the little bitch to be his bedfellow, if she had couched half the court beside her! She surely loved him . . . . But she had before sworn to Derham that she loved him—her words almost admitted as much; and she had turned from him. No, there were fillies enough in England to fill his need. To the block with the trollop? . . . . Ah, but she had such a soft full little body, such merry tricks.

"What is your will, sire?" the council asked him.

He flung wide his hand to Cranmer and the rest. He could not trust his warring passions to decide this. "Do what is right, in this most grievous matter."

Well, what was right, in their Protestant eyes, was to end the Catholic wanton. So she was put in durance, and her keys taken from her. On the 11th of November Cranmer, Wriothesley, and the comptroller went to the queen, and spoke to her the king's pleasure, that she should depart on the following Monday to Sion House, while the inquiry pended. Her household was largely scattered, the maids of honor dismissed, her attendants decreased in number. The king determined to lay before Parliament and the judges the tale of the queen's misdemeanors, leaving out only the matter of the precontract; and to have this announced to her household, with the same omission, that the whole might be a lesson in deportment to each and every one of them. The queen's very jewels were to be confiscated to her royal husband.

The council had determined to proceed against the little girl queen on the charge of adultery, rather than on the charge of the precontract with Derham. Clearly this could not be charged against Derham with her; so some other man must be found. It was hard to cull out a single object of suspicion; except that there had been an impropriety once with her kinsman, Thomas Culpepper.

This Thomas Culpepper, the son of Catherine's uncle, Sir John Culpepper, of Holingbourn, in Kent, had been a gentleman of the privy chamber to Henry before the elevation of his fair cousin to queenship. His name was listed among the royal appointments at the coronation of Anne of Cleves; he had shone in the jousts at Durham House, in honor of those brief nuptials. He had been the little girl's playmate in childhood; he had been near her person at court; he must be the scapegoat . . . .

The queen's attendants were queried strictly, for anything tending to bolster up this tale. The men were put to the torture; there were rumors that the women were, too. It was Wriothesley and Rich who were assigned to collect the evidence; and these two stopped at nothing. Much later, when the executioner's heart flagged in torturing the young and lovely Anne Askew, these two threw off their gowns and worked the rack with their own dewed hands, until they nearly tore her delicate body apart. Cavendish, one of Henry's poets, for this pictured Wriothesley:

> From vile estate of base and low degree,
> By false deceit, by craft and subtle ways,
> Of mischief mold and key of cruelty,
> Was crept full high, borne up by various stays
> . . . .
> With ireful eyes, or glaring like a cat,
> Killing by spite whom he thought fit to hit.

A gentle tool for the roaring monarch . . . .

He wrote to his colleague Sadler, delighted at "picking out any thing that is likely to serve the purpose of our business,"—that is, the business of saddling adultery upon the queen. "I assure you," he wrote on, "my woman Tylney has done us worthy service and true, as it appears."

Katherine Tylney's deposition, at Westminster, November 13th . . . . She remembers at Lincoln the queen went two nights out of her chamber when it was late, to Lady Rochford's chamber, which was up a little pair of stairs by the queen's chamber. She and another maid had gone up with the queen, and had been dismissed by the queen. When it was two of the clock, this other maid came up to bed with her, and Mistress Tylney had asked the other maid, "Jesus! is not the queen abed yet?" To be answered, "Yes, she has just now gone to bed." The second night she, Mistress Tylney, had been taken up with the

queen, and had been told to wait in a little place with my Lady Rochford's woman, wherefore on her peril she never saw who came in to the queen and Lady Rochford, nor heard what was said between them. The queen, Mistress Tylney continued, had sent her with strange messages to Lady Rochford, as, at Hampton Court, lately, to ask her when she, the queen, should have the thing promised to her; bearing back to the queen Lady Rochford's answer, that she sat up for it, and would the next day bring her word herself . . . . A like message and answer Mistress Tylney had borne to Suffolk . . . .

A long way from adultery, all this . . . . perhaps referring to some article of attire or jewels that the queen sought to gain in an underhand way, as she had once gotten them from Derham.

Margaret Morton, Tylney's companion, spoke vaguely that she believed Lady Rochford was privy to some intrigue the queen was carrying on at Lincoln, Pontefract, and York. Lady Rochford, this Margaret said, conveyed letters to and from the queen to her cousin Culpepper, as it was supposed. One night, with only Lady Rochford and the queen together in the former's apartment, she had locked the door, and had delayed thus the entrance of the king's self.

Catherine denied the slightest intimacy between herself and her cousin.

The ladies about the queen were not questioned. Margaret Douglas (whose first lover, Lord Thomas Howard, had died imprisoned in the Tower for having plighted his troth, without the king's permission, to the royal maid), was reprimanded, not for being party to the queen's levity, but for having entered into a clandestine courtship on her own account with Lord Charles Howard, half-brother of her first love, and uncle to the queen.

And so the queen's noble suite was dismissed, with full

details of her alleged misdeeds, and with a threat by the lord chancellor's own lips that there was still further abomination charged against Catherine, which for the present he left in a cloud.

The very next day the king's ministers, eager for the blood of the young Catholic queen, addressed a circular to the king's ministers abroad, telling all the details of the queen's alleged misconduct. The vilest particulars were included in their letter to the French ambassador. Once let all this be spread across the soiled consciences of Europe, and the king could not admit the once maid to his bed again.

For Henry still wanted her, no doubt of that. There was no proof of her disloyalty to him; what was true against her were these earlier matters, where she had been no more at fault than an alabaster statue plastered with filth by a scouring tempest. No, the bent reed must not be let rise again; batter down now, while Henry's ire was at heat. When he cooled, her name would be too foul on men's mouths to let her ever again queen it over the long fouled bed of England's king.

The dowager-duchess sent her confidential servant, Pewson, to Hampton Court, to ascertain the state of the charges against Catherine. When word came back of the alleged misconduct with Derham, with Katherine Tylney privy to their guilt, the old gossip said she could not believe the tale; but that, if it were true, the three of them deserved worse than hanging.

Norfolk, the queen's uncle, alienated by her siding with the dowager-duchess before this, sent, at the king's order, to the duchess's house at Lambeth to take over Derham's papers and effects. The silly old busybody was at her troublemaking again. She and her kitchen yeoman, before the messenger arrived, carried off and, as many say, destroyed, after breaking into Derham's coffers and trunks,

everything in them that might be brought into evidence against herself or any of the parties who had known of the queen's early indiscretions.

Norfolk was told of them. Arrest the duchess and her people at once, and put them under inquisition for what they had done. Ashby, her man, testified how she had taken the writings in Derham's coffers to her chamber, to peruse them at her leisure, lest any come to revealment. The duchess had expressed a fear that Alice Wilks had told Lord William of the familiarity between the queen and Derham. She had said further, "If there has been no offense since the marriage, the queen ought not to die for it"; she spoke vaguely of some pardon—perhaps the one the king was said to be preparing; wondering if it would serve other persons who knew of the queen's naughty life before her marriage.

Derham, questioned as to the duchess's knowledge, told how the duchess had once seen him kiss her granddaughter, for which she struck him, beat her, and gave Mistress Bulmer a blow for permitting it. Many times, he said, she had blamed him and Catherine. The queen's own desire, he said, had gotten him into the royal household; her majesty had instructed the duchess to bring him in.

This fact stood out. The council insisted that it proved Catherine's intention to wrong the king. A vicar handy

. . . .

Wriothesley dilated upon the agitation of the duchess. She learned of this; she had not forgotten the recent fate of the old countess of Salisbury. She fell very ill, when her arrest was ordered, and said she was not well enough to be moved. In spite of her protests, the old gossip, sick as she was, was put into prison. Her man Pewson, Wriothesley wrote, was still stiff from the torture. In the Tower, Wriothesley and Southampton queried the duchess. She swore that she would take her death of it, that she had

never suspected any wrong between Catherine and Derham, though she had rebuked their over-affection, and knew of his presents of money to her. For her breaking into his coffers and destroying his papers, she confessed that she had wronged the king, and humbly, out of her sickness and age, besought his pardon.

The queen was ill, the grandmother was ill . . . . and day after day the wily servants of the council were subtly seeking to entangle them into a web that would strangle them both.

No evidence proving adultery could be extorted from the duchess, or from any witness. On the 31st of November, Culpepper and Derham were arraigned for high treason in Guildhall, before the lord mayor, contrary to the law of the land. The lord chancellor sat on one side of the mayor, and Southampton on the other; the lord privy seal, Sussex, Hertford, and others of the council, also sat as judges.

Sentence of the court? Guilty: to undergo the dreadful death imposed on traitors. This though there had been no proof. Yet still evidence must be found against the queen. A respite for a few days, and then the torture for both. From day to day they underwent this, yielding in their agony, but never so far as to say anything untrue against the queen. Culpepper swore to the queen's innocence to the last; Derham never swerved from his insistence that nothing criminal had passed between him and the queen since the marriage.

Here was Damport, Derham's friend: what could be squeezed out of him? No time for gentility now; the Protestant council must have their Catholic victim. Put him to the brakes; force his teeth out of his living head—that sweet implement called the duke of Exeter's daughter. Broken at last, he said what he had said before, that Derham had said to him, that while the king favored Mistress

Catherine, he, Derham, could be sure of her if he would, but he did not dare to, since the king began to love her; but that, if Henry were dead, he might marry her.

Even this Derham denied.

The council, at the king's will, announced that, if nothing more could be got out of Culpepper and Derham, they might prepare their souls for their executions.

The council in London wrote to the council of the king that, though they thought the offense of Culpepper very heinous, they had given merciful orders for him to be drawn to Tyburn, and there lose only his head, according to the king's most gracious will.

Derham petitioned for some mitigation of his sentence. The king announced that he deserved no mercy, and had determined that the man must undergo the full sentence.

On the day after, the two condemned were drawn to Tyburn. Culpepper, through his noble connections, was merely beheaded. Derham was hanged, quartered, with all the other red plays of a traitor's death. Both protested their innocence; their heads were placed on London bridge. One, at least, had played with a maid whom Henry later coveted; was this excess pain for that presumptuous pleasance?

CHAPTER XXIX

The End of Noble Having

WELL, now for the other lesser prey. The old duchess was haled up for three offenses: for knowing of the early intimacy; for introducing Derham to the queen's household; for destroying the evidence against Derham. Her son, Lord William Howard, his wife, and Anne Howard, were arrested too. The property of all was immediately sequestered: Henry, as ever, needed more gold, and this was an easy way to gain it. The council sniffed: what was this report that some of Lord William's property had been thrown into the sea, midway of a stormy passage from France? Only mules and horses, it appeared. Misprision of treason—passive complicity in, or concealment of, the treason of another—was charged against them. Others were arrested, Damport to suffer still further tortures, though his head had already been emptied of all it knew in the matter. The four infant children of Lord William Howard, and those of the Lady Bridgewater, were for a time a problem: at last they were turned over to Cranmer, the bishop of Durham, and Lady Oxford, to deal with them according to their own discretion and convenience . . . .

The council in London worried aloud to the council of the king that they feared the old and testy duchess might die out of perversity, to defraud the king's highness of the confiscation of her goods; and recommended that she and the other parties be indicted forthwith, giving parliament better grounds to confiscate their goods. They wrote further that they found two thousand marks in money, and six or seven hundred in plate, belonging to the duchess. Here's

Southampton, Wriothesley, and Sadler triumphantly informing Henry that the sick old duchess had confessed where she had hid eight hundred pounds more of her money. Lord William Howard's property was appraised, as was Lady Bridgewater's; Lady Rochford's house at Blickling, in Norfolk, was put under sequestration.

Mary Lassells was exempted from the indictment, in return for her tattling, and her refusal to enter into the service of the queen. Damport was found guilty of misprision of treason; so was Manox, that ill-starred player on the virginals, who had been the first man to initiate the young queen; so were the servants of the old duchess. Punishment of death on these was remitted by the king's gracious heart.

On January 16, 1542, the new parliament that was to decide the queen's fate met at Westminster. Catherine had been promised that her life would be spared; and now the bill for her attainder was brought before the lords. The only man who might have aided her in her bleak distress, her uncle Norfolk, was alienated forever, by her own acts. Norfolk was the greatest and richest peer in England, with his own little standing army of pensioners, in spite of royal prohibition. He could have risen up in the Lords and insisted that his niece, the queen of England, be given an Englishman's right of fair trial. No: she had forfeited all claim to his sympathy. He was the same cruel, vindictive woman-hunter that he had been, when Anne Boleyn stood accused.

His letter to the king, touching the arrest of the members of his family, spoke of "my lewd sister of Bridgewater," "the most abominable deeds done by two of my nieces . . . . against your royal majesty."

The bill for the attainder of Catherine Howard, late queen of England, Jane Lady Rochford, Agnes Howard duchess of Norfolk, Anne countess of Bridgewater, Lord

William Howard, Anne Howard, wife to the queen's brother Henry, and some others, was read for the first time on January 21st. A week later the solicitous lord chancellor urged that a deputation be sent to the queen, to persuade her to say anything that might help her cause. The council negatived this; she must be given no opportunity, however limited, of speaking aught in her own defense.

Eight days after, on the 6th of February, the bill was rushed through both houses.

On the 10th, the queen was conveyed by water from her cell at Sion Abbey to the Tower, under the charge of Suffolk, the lord privy seal, and the lord great chamberlain. How she took the final word, how she bore herself on this wintry passage, there is a silence in the chronicles. She was sprung of the Carlovingians and the Plantagenets; she had royal blood in her veins, as her husband had, and she may have stayed queen to the last. Before the end of the long journey, darkness had spread over Thames. This was a merciful darkness: it shielded from her tear-wearied eyes the heads of her paramour Derham, and her cousin Culpepper, still poled upon the bridge.

The next day Henry gave his assent to the bill of attainder against his still beloved consort, the girl Catherine Howard; and against the Lady Rochford, Thomas Culpepper, and Francis Derham. Two of these had passed beyond minding deed of the king's.

The lord chancellor produced the bill, with the royal seal and the king's sign manual, in the Lords, and desired that the commons might attend.

Suffolk rose. "I and my fellow deputies have been with the queen. She has openly confessed to us the great crime of which she has been guilty against the most high God"—the English protestant god, no doubt of that, "and a kind prince; and, lastly, against the whole English nation." A

little girl, mistaught, lacking a mother's guidance, passion hot-housed by lustful serving women, had yielded to a seducing adventurer: crime enough against God, the king, the whole people of the realm! Suffolk spoke on, giving her plea in behalf of her brothers. Lastly, she besought his majesty to bestow some of her clothes on those maid-servants who had been with her since the time of her marriage, since she had now nothing else with which to recompense them as they deserved.

Southampton rose, confirmed this, added to it.

The commons entered; the king's assent to the bill was given by commission, in his absence; the bill became a law. Suffolk had gone to the queen accompanied by Cranmer, Southampton, Audley, and Thirlby. What she confessed men had only from their lips; hers never told.

She was told that she must prepare for death. She addressed her confessor, Dr. Longland, bishop of Lincoln, in these slow words: "As to the act, my reverend lord, for which I stand condemned, God and his holy angels I take to witness, upon my soul's salvation, that I die guiltless, never having so abused my sovereign's bed. What other sins and follies of youth I have committed I will not excuse. But I am assured that, for them, God has brought this punishment upon me, and will, in his mercy, remit them, for which, I pray you, pray with me unto his Son and my Savior, Christ."

Cranmer had softened toward the end, and begged her to save her life, by confessing the precontract with Derham. No—and scorn was on her tongue like a lash. Better go to the block as queen of England, than drag out a dishonored life as a queen put by. The Church of Rome allowed no divorce except in cases of precontract; and, as Catherine denied to the last that she had been troth-plight to Derham, the marriage to Henry could not be cut, but by the gross ax

of the executioner. Toward Norfolk Catherine uttered a hatred not unexpected, in view of his attitude toward her cousin, Anne Boleyn, herself, and her grandmother.

On February 11th she was notified of the royal assent to the act of attainder. Two days later, she was led to the scaffold.

England by now knew the taste of blood—of noble, even of royal blood—on the scaffold. But there was small pride in its once merry heart at this second beheading of an English queen, by the gross fat royal bull. Lady Rochford, whose word had sent her husband and Anne Boleyn to the block, was universally hated in England; there were no tears for her fate. And hatred of her eclipsed regret at the death of the gentler wanton.

Ottwell Johnson, an eyewitness of the end, wrote it in full to his brother John Johnson, merchant of the staple at Calais: "They made the most godly and Christian end that ever was heard tell of, I think, since the world's creation, uttering their lively faith in the blood of Christ only; and with godly words and steadfast countenances they desired all Christian people to take regard, unto their worthy and just punishment of death for their offenses, against God, heinously, from their youth upward, and also against the king's royal majesty very dangerously, wherefore they being justly condemned, as they said"—and so to the end of it.

There were some who, to the end, held that the queen was innocent.

Lady Rochford's last words were that she supposed God had let her suffer this shameful doom, as a punishment for having done her husband to death by her false accusation of queen Anne Boleyn; but that she was guilty of no other crime. She said this, when the head of Catherine Howard lay bleeding before her. Small room or time for lies now

. . . .

A few days before the execution of this fifth wife, Henry took to himself the title of King of Ireland. Catherine Howard died, the first queen of England and Ireland.

The beheaded body was borne with ribald haste, and interred hurriedly near the body of her beheaded cousin, Anne Boleyn,—in St. Peter's chapel of the Tower. Cavendish squired her shade, in his verses; seeing her approach "all be-wept in black and poor estate," and having her confess her adulteries; also having Culpepper confess the fault which few believed him guilty of.

Henry writhed in anguish at this death of his beloved queen. Well, what had happened must never hap again. And so he had Parliament pass an act that, if any person knew of a flaw in the character of any lady whom the king might propose to marry, without revealing it, he was guilty of misprision of high treason; and the lady, in addition, if she deceived her sovereign on this point, was to undergo the death.

England, its merriment half forgotten, laughed bitterly at this: bitterly, and long. Not a maid in the kingdom would bed with the king now! He would have no chance but to mate with a noted whore, or a widow.

Which he proceeded to do.

CHAPTER XXX

The Comely Widow

WELL, the bed was empty again; and the king needed desperately to turn his mind away from the lovely young wife, whom he had been jockeyed into sending to her death. Time now for a reburst of royal piety, and a bit of the mailed fist in disciplining his subjects on sacred topics. This year Henry prohibited the use of Tyndal's version of the Bible, as being crafty, false, and untrue; and he ordered the authorized version to be published without note or comment. Moreover, even the authorized copy was not to be read in public; it was to be found only in the houses of gentlemen of rank and nobles, for family use; and its private study was restricted to ladies of gentle birth, and householders.

The commonalty were not left ignored. He had already named two committees of prelates, under him, as supreme head of Christ's church, who were to draw up a new code of doctrines and ceremonies. Three years their labors took; and on April 30, 1543, it was produced under the title of a "necessary doctrine and erudition for every christened man." It was generally called "the king's book," and was hailed by all as the final standard of English orthodoxy. Henry, God be praised, had uttered the world's last word upon religion—no tomorrow could improve upon it. Men went to their beds calmed by this soothing thought.

Then there was the matter of the infanta of Scotland, Mary Stuart. Henry and Francis had ill blood, as a result of France's long upstirring of the Scottish people. Now both offered their sons as spouses for this daughter of James V

CATHERINE PARR

1547 (?)

From the painting in the collection of the Earl of Ashburnham,
at Ashburnham Park, Sussex

of Scotland and Marie de Longueville. Out of this rivalry, war broke out. This called for more politics. Henry sent overtures to his imperial nephew, and in February, 1543, peace was declared between them. As price of this, Henry restored to the blood of succession the princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, the emperor's aunt; though he did not withdraw specifically the taint of illegitimacy placed upon her. And so the imperial forces, and six thousand English auxiliaries, campaigned against France, with no noteworthy gain to either side.

One statesmanlike thing Henry had done: and that was to join Wales and England together, in 1536, under the same political system. Gone were the hundred forty-one separate lordships of Wales, each with its separate laws; instead, the English shire system, under a uniform law, was extended to cover the Cambrian hills. Ireland was somewhat pacified; Henry called himself its king, and the supreme head of its church.

Meanwhile, what of another wife? Henry speculated abroad. Mary Stuart was a babe in arms; a trifle too young, even for the aging king's taste. Abroad, there was the attractive Christina, dowager-duchess of Milan. Overtures were made to her: would she consider a proposal from his most English majesty? She was a lady of wit, and immortalized her declination with the remark, "If I had two heads, one would have been at the service of his majesty of England." The higher head few women cared to place at his service.

The king's gaze fell upon Mistress Catherine Parr, nearer at home.

Sir Thomas Parr, father of the lady, was of a more distinguished ancestry than Sir Thomas Boleyn or Sir John Seymour, two other English knights who had furnished queens to the king's mortuary records. An ancient Norman

ancestor of the Parrs, Ivo de Taillebois, had married Lucy, sister of the great earls Morcar and Edwin; this gave the family the blood of the Anglo-Saxon kings, who ruled young England after the Celts and the Romans, and before the Danes and the Normans. Ivo de Taillebois, first baron of Kendal, was in his own might a little king in the north. William de Lancaster, seventh in descent from him, died without issue, and the honor and estates of the great family passed to William's sisters, Helwise and Alice. Margaret, eldest co-heiress of Helwise by Peter le Brus, wed with a son of Robert lord Roos, of Hamlake and Werks, and his wife Isabel, daughter of king Alexander II of Scotland. Their great-granddaughter, Elizabeth, wedded Sir William de Parr, knight. Sir William Parr, their grandson, married a royal relation; and, through this connection, Catherine Parr, allied to the Norman conquerors, the Anglo-Saxon kings, and the royal house of Scotland, was fourth cousin to Henry VIII.

Sir William Parr's wife brought to the family the estates of the Marmions, those ancient knights of England. Catherine Parr's mother, Matilda or Maud Green, was daughter of a knight of Northamptonshire, and was descended from the Talbots and the Throckmortons. This Matilda was married to Sir Thomas Parr in 1508; and the daughter Catherine was probably born in 1513, at a time when the father, Sir Thomas, was master of the wards and comptroller of the household to Henry VIII. As a token of his royal favor, the Tudor monarch presented to his comptroller a gold chain valued at a hundred and forty pounds. The daughter of this knight, who was to share the king's bed toward his twilight, was born at Kendal Castle, in Westmoreland, the ancient seat of the family since the thundering days of Ivo de Taillebois, the kingly Norman.

This feudal stronghold rose like a gray crown over the

green crests of Kendal. Its lofty sight opens to view the town below, the evergreen valley of the Kent, with its clear swift song as it courses over its untroubled rocks. The castle had a vast circular tower, a large enclosure of ivy-cloaked walls, and crumbling arches. All of these the little Catherine Parr knew.

This was march-land between England and Scotland; and from times unremembered the lord of Kendal Castle, alike with his feudal neighbor of Sizergh, was bound to furnish forth a large quota of men-at-arms, to hold the border—a quota of horse, of foot, and, most of all, of Kendal archers, famed in tale and song. They had dealt their straight blow at Flodden, and many another field. This castle Dame Maud Parr chose for her lying-in, at an hour when the north was on fire with the threat of a thrust from Scotland, led by the king's self. Sir Thomas Parr was on duty against this menace; and his warlike wife, instead of electing the calm of London or the serenity of Green's Norton, her own domain, chose to share her husband's peril in the north; and here gave birth to Catherine. There were two other children, a son and a daughter.

Sir Thomas Parr died in 1517, leaving his three infant children to the guardianship of his widow. By will he committed his body to Blackfriar's Church, London. He left all his manors, lands, and tenements to his wife during her life. His daughters were to have eight hundred pounds between them, as marriage portions; but if they proved to be his heirs or the heirs of his son, this sum was to be laid out in copes and vestments for the monks of Clairveaux, with a hundred pounds bestowed on the chantrey of Kendal. His son William was to have the great gold chain, given him by his royal master Henry. He did not name his daughter as a bequest to his sovereign; that was to come later.

Some tell that the lady Catherine Parr received a

learned education from her father; but, since she was only in her fifth year when he died, he can but have started her on her classics. It was her mother who saw to it that she was a queen in spirit and brain, as well as in person. She read and wrote Latin with ease, had a bowing acquaintance with Greek, and was no stranger to the modern languages. When Catherine was yet a child, a wise astrologer cast her horoscope, and told the delighted chit that she was born to sit in the highest seat of imperial majesty, since all of the great stars and planets were in her house. She did not forget this. One day her mother told her, "Come my dear, to your work."

A disdainful shrug of the little girl's shoulders. "Mother, my hands are destined to hold crowns and sceptres, and not spindles and needles."

This youthful error was soon corrected. Her hands were born to touch both.

Catherine's mother was barely twenty-two when her husband died. This mother did not marry again; instead, she devoted herself to the upbringing of the three babies. Before Catherine was twelve, the devoted mother was offering the daughter for sale on the marriage market. The mother dealt with her kinsman Lord Dacre, promoting a marriage between Catherine and Dacre's grandson, the heir of Lord Scroop,—the boy being less than thirteen at the time. She was a shrewd trader, this mother . . . . 1,100 marks for jointure, which the mother would dole out, a hundred a year; 200 marks to be repaid if Catherine dies before sixteen; the marriage not to take place until Catherine was at least twelve, and the little boy thirteen; if it broke off before then, for any cause, all monies to be refunded; so much for the daughter's upkeep, to be retained by the mother until the young children began to live together, and thereafter to go to them . . . . And so on and on and on,

"as Jesus knows, (may) who preserve your lordship." Marriages, both the mother and Lord Dacre, as well as every one in the world living, well knew, are all made in Heaven. Some particular celestial underling had the whole thing in charge. People had nothing to do with it: marriages were not made on earth, and people were not allowed to run loose in heaven, until they sprouted wings and grew into angels. Some god or angel came into the family of little Catherine Parr, looked around, and saw that it was the heavenly will that she should marry Lord Scroop's heir. Moreover, he prompted the mother to bargain for just so many pounds . . . . The same god or angel, or some assistant, came into the family of Lord Dacre, looked around, and saw that it was God's will that the boy should marry the little Parr girl—at least, that the negotiations should proceed. He prompted the boy's family to ask for just so much. Once the agreement was made, the celestial underling left the human beings to work out the heavenly will in their own close fashion. He discreetly turned his back, busied himself with drilling the heavenly choir or conducting wing drill for the neophyte angels, while on earth various human things took place. The ancients held otherwise. They had all wickedly thought that woman's beauty, which they personified as Aphrodite, Venus, Ishtar, Ashtoreth, and by other tempting old names, had something to do with it; and that the pillar of smoke by day, and of fire by night, which of old led the children of Israel into their promised land, had something to do with it. They even personified the pillar by outlandish appellations. All wickedness . . . . Certain evil modern heretics and schismatics, contrary to the express words of God and King Harry, had in their ravings, denied the eternal marriage-broking of the celestial hosts, and spoke of such foul scientific things as proximity and the body's hunger . . . . But they were already corpses on

Tower Hill, or behind some meaner dungeon. Marriages are made in heaven; and, this being so, do you accept my terms? demanded Dame Maud Parr of Lord Dacre.

Lord Scroop of Bolton Castle, the boy's father, had a different word from Heaven. There could be no refunding; and forty pounds, and not fifty, a year, should be devoted to the little girl's upkeep. This was the will of God, he said very plainly.

Lord Dacre had his own converse with Heaven, and expressed a reasonable compromise. Cut down the financial demands a little; furnish the son with clothing and a servant, while Dame Parr furnished him with meat and drink. You this, she that . . . . on and on and on. This was the will of Heaven, no doubt of that.

Three different heavens, in only three people. And no doubt little Catherine had her own heaven, that spoke to her prettily, though not of tupping and tumbling; and the little boy had his own heaven, perhaps a bit more scarlet, but still concerned hardly at all with mere girls. And the wise men said that each man had his heaven within him. But they did not say this so that the Holy Father in Rome, or the Holy Father-King in England, might overhear.

Lord Dacre utters the will of Heaven again, more plainly this time. "Lord Scroop must needs have money, and he has nothing whereof to make it but the marriage of his said son." Poor father, condemned to poverty by Heaven, in order that Heaven's plans for a marriage might be expedited!

Dame Parr replied regretfully. The custom of the country, and the advice of her friends, agreed in interpreting the will of Heaven: that she was not called upon to support the boy and his father as well, on any such hard bargain as Lord Scroop desired.

Lord Dacre made one final stab at having Heaven's will

carried out, insisting to his kinswoman that the custom of the country, as well as the will of Heaven, was with Lord Scroop's demands.

A strange error had been made. The negotiations were broken off; it became clear, after all, that the real will of Heaven lay elsewhere. The angels had been saying something else, after all; something was wrong merely with the hearing of the three bargainers. Well, back to your little heavens, little girl, little boy, while your parents and relatives look abroad again, at Heaven's command, and see what brisker bargain offers for your bodies, your time, your minds, your souls . . . . your posterity . . . .

Heaven functioned promptly. Catherine's mother found an elderly widower, with children, some of which were the age of Catherine's mother. His name was Edward, Lord Borough of Gainsborough; his family of old had been called de Burgh, and had towered beside many English kings. Lord Borough's son, Henry, soon married Catherine's friend and kinswoman, Catherine Neville, the widow of the lord of nearby Sizergh. This Catherine was twenty-nine when she married; which made her fourteen years older than her husband's stepmother, little Catherine Parr. Lord Borough had seats at Gainsborough, Catterick, Newark, and elsewhere. The Borough arms, on the tomb of the father of Catherine's husband, were quartered in Gainsborough Church with those of Taillebois, Marmion, and Fitzhugh, showing that the families were intertwined. This husband died in 1528 or 1529; leaving Catherine Parr a widow, for the first time, at the age of fifteen.

Soon after the husband died, Catherine's mother died and was buried, after having robbed the daughter of her share in her father's estate, to promote a marriage between her son, Sir William Parr, and one of the king's relatives, Lady Bourchier. The will was not proved for two years, so

complicated was the problem of straightening out the grasping mix-up caused by Dame Maud. It was solved somehow; and all reflected that Heaven moves in a mysterious way, its marriages to perform . . . .

The king and his cousin kept in touch with the young widow, sixteen, orphaned, residing probably in Sizergh castle at this time. She was heiress-presumptive to her brother William; she must stay near Kendal castle; and so she took up her abode with her old daughter-in-law, Lady Strickland; who called the little girl, fourteen years her junior, her "good mother." The daughter chaperoned this good mother acceptably.

Catherine Parr sat down to her broidery, and completed the magnificent counterpane and toilet-cover, still proudly exhibited at Sizergh Castle. Both were worked on the richest white satin. The central pattern was a medallion, enwreathed with a circlet of natural flowers, wrought in twisted silk and bullion. A spread eagle, in bold relief, gorged with the imperial crown, forms the middle. At each corner struts in frigid pose a lively heraldic monster, some near relative of the royal dragons, glowing with purple, crimson, and gold. The field was gaily sprinkled with large flowers, very rainbows for color, embossed highly and enriched with threads of gold. The toilette was of similar but smaller pattern. They two were the ornament of the fine state chamber in that ancient wing of Sizergh called the Deincourt Tower, panelled with rich carved black oak, and tapestried divinely. The designs on this show all the forms of venery—hunting scenes ranging from the chase of the fox to the hunt of the lion; curiously interwreathed with trees and flowers, and bordered with a scene whereon young tigers sported with one another, claws bared, like very tumbling kittens. In such high magnificence Catherine lived and moved at Sizergh.

Catherine Parr continued widow of Lord Borough a few years, and, before she was twenty, married a second time, again wedding a widower, and again becoming a stepmother. Her second husband was the mature John Neville, Lord Latimer, a relative of Lady Strickland, her elderly daughter-in-law and chaperone. Lord Latimer was related to Catherine Parr as nearly as her first husband, Lord Borough, had been. Lord Latimer had been married twice before, to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Musgrave, who died childless, and to Dorothy, daughter of Sir George de Vere, sister and co-heiress of John de Vere, fourteenth earl of Oxford, by whom he had two children. The de Veres were perhaps the noblest and most ancient family in all England.

When Catherine married this widower, she took up her principal abode at Snape Hall, in Yorkshire, seated amid well wooded parks, about two miles from Great Tanfield. By this marriage, the manors of Cumberton, Wadborough, and other Worcestershire estates, which her husband had inherited from Elizabeth Beauchamp, were settled on Catherine Parr. Catherine's forbears, the Marmions, had once held sway at Tanfield; and its castle and manor had now descended to Catherine's brother. Sir William Parr was still childless; Catherine was his heiress still; Lord Latimer harked to the will of Heaven in this particular, which whispered to him he might as well hazard his hand, with the chance of gaining these rich wide acres through the young widow. Besides, she was young, lovely, accomplished, virtuous, learned. The first three of these were virtues, in Henry's England; the fourth might be a bit of a bother, the fifth was at times a positive annoyance: for what man looks in a wife for wit greater than his own? If a man's wife be learned, whom can he show his superiority over? But pass that by; she was landed, in prospect especially, and would

make an admirable and pedantic stepmother to his two children.

He was a Catholic: a strenuous, belligerent Catholic, being one of the leaders of the Northern insurrection, when the monasteries were suppressed, and when Cromwell took over the church properties in 1536. This rebellion, engendered in the starvation of the commonalty, deprived of conventual alms in straitened days, assumed the air of a domestic crusade against the devil-begotten enemies of the olden faith, and was called the Pilgrimage of Grace. Forty thousand yeomen of Yorkshire took to their rustic arms, lifting white banners with the Savior figured upon them stretched upon the cross, and with the chalice and the sacramental host depicted also on them. Their two resonant leaders were a low gentleman named Robert Aske, and a strange figure dubbing himself earl of Poverty; but many gentlemen, including the archbishop of York, Lord Neville, Lord D'Arcy, and Lord Latimer, were allied with them. Norfolk was sent to tread down the rebellion; with discretion, when he saw what fronted him, he sued for a peace; and Lord Latimer was one of the delegates of the uprising, to treat with him.

What did they want, these pilgrims of grace? Restoration of the monasteries, and of the supremacy of Paul the Third, who was too busied in his amours with his sister Wilhelmina and his daughter Constance, and with his atheistic philosophizings, to render them much aid. Suppression of heretical books, such as the writings of Wycliff, Luther, Melancthon, and others named. Burning of the heretical bishops, or that they be forced to fight for their lives in single combat with certain valiantly disposed pilgrims, who were anxious to please God by disembowelling the recreant churchmen. Legal and statistical reforms. Lastly, that the king should expel from his council all men of low or villain

blood, especially Cromwell, Rich, and others, who had risen from a humble station in society. They were humble folk themselves, these Yorkshiremen; Cromwell was no better than they; Rich no better; let such presumptuous self-made fleas hop off the people's back, and leave the sucking to fleas of the blood noble and the bile royal!

The conscience of the king had the vomits at these exorbitant demands. He set to framing his reply himself. He was aghast that ignorant people should go about instructing him, Henry Tudor, king of England, destined once for the archbishopric of Canterbury or higher soaring, and now head of Christ's church on English earth, in matters theologic! Had not the king's own book, writ with his own hand, against the heresies of Luther, earned him the papal title of "defender of the faith"? And—telling him how to make laws, as if, after eight-and-twenty years, he was not fit to rein his own realm! Their petitions? Off with 'em! As to their taking up arms, that would be forgiven, if they would render up their ringleaders to royal clemency. Lastly, he admonished them to admire the benignity of their sovereign.

No thanks, your majesty; better battle than this. Norfolk, shrewd, tactful Norfolk, with his silken words again: at which, the people laid down their arms, on promise of free royal pardon, with a promise that parliament would discuss their grievances. Norfolk kept to his own bosom his knowledge that the parliament was merely so many mouthpieces for the king's will; or, at most, for this, modified by the tentative suggestions of a few of the council. The people laid down their arms; and Henry was persuaded, with much ill grace, to publish the pardon to all.

This pardon was dated December 9, 1536. In February, the insurrection broke out again; but, this time, Lord Latimer did not join it. Perhaps Catherine's insistence turned

him. And so, at the end, he escaped what his fellows met—Lord D'Arcy, Sir Robert Constable, Sir Stephen Hamerton, and more than three score and ten more. Hamerton's daughter was affianced to Catherine's young kinsman, Walter Strickland; several of the Nevilles lost their heads at this time; Lord Latimer had been among them, in the first uprising . . . . nothing here to make the days of Latimer and his wife overly serene. This erysipelas of executions against Catholics, which might spread to a plague at any mood of Henry's . . . . The lord privy seal, Sir John Russell, took this inauspicious hour to demand of Latimer the loan of his fine mansion in the churchyard of the Chartreux, later called the Charterhouse, for one of his friends. With ill grace Latimer granted this: no time to antagonize any who had Henry's near ear.

Catherine's sister, Lady Herbert, received an appointment in Jane Seymour's court, and assisted at the christening of the young prince Edward, Jane's child. Catherine herself became acquainted with the learned old king, and rose in his favor. Her aunt's husband, Sir George Throckmorton, out of a neighbor dispute between himself and high Cromwell, over some detail of their contiguous manors of Coughton Court and Oursley, was suddenly clapped into jail, accused of denying the king's supremacy. No light charge, especially since Sir George's brother Michael was in the service of the suspect Cardinal Pole. The Throckmorton manuscript, prepared at the time by Sir George's nephew, Sir Thomas Throckmorton, tells the story in verse:

> My father's foes clapt him, through cankered hate,
> In Tower fast, and gaped to joint his neck;
> They were in hope for to obtain a *mate,*
> Who heretofore had labored for a *check;*
> Yes, Grevilles grieved him ill without a cause!
> Who hurt not them, nor yet the prince's laws.

Thus everything did run against the hair;
Our name disgraced, and we but witness boys,
Did deem it hard such crosses then to bear—
Our minds more fit to deal with childish toys;
But troubles are of perfect wit the schools,
When life at will feeds men as fat as fools.

Then followed a poignant passage, depicting Lady Throckmorton, in her tears, as a drowned mouse—surely a fragrant simile! And then comes the family of Parr to the rescue:

While flocking foes to work our bane were bent,
While thunder-claps of angry Jove did last,
Then to Lord Parr my mother saw me sent,
So with her brother I was safely placed;
Of alms he kept me in extremity,
Who did misdoubt a worse calamity.

Oh, lucky looks that fawned on Catherine Parr!
A woman rare like her but seldom seen,
To Borough first, and then to Latimer,
She widow was, and then became a queen;

A bit premature, this note.

My mother prayed her niece with watery eyes,
To rid both her and hers from endless cries.

She, willing of herself to do us good,
Sought out the means her uncle's life to save;
And when the king was in his pleasing mood
She humbly then her suit began to crave;
With wooing times denials disagree,
She spake and sped—my father was set free.

A bit of confusion here. All of this took place long before any formal wooing of Catherine Parr by Henry; but poetic licenses were two for a penny in Bluff King Hal's hour. In 1540 this took place; the deliverance was effected just before the arrest of Cromwell. Cromwell's fall may

have been due in part to his little Catholic wanton of a wife, Catherine Howard; but the words of Catherine Parr, Lady Latimer, a Catholic zealot, married to a peer who was a member of the church of Rome, played their part in his fall.

Sir George Throckmorton, thus happily spared from durance and threat of death, took a prominent part in the execution of Cromwell; and not only retained his manor of Coughton Court, but was enabled to purchase Cromwell's manor of Oursley, at a good bargain, from the crown, to whom it reverted; since Henry's justice was always tempered by acquisitiveness.

Catherine Parr's brother was married to the heiress of the last earl of Essex, of the ancient line of Bourchier. When this lord died, his honors, which should have gone to his descendants, were grasped by Cromwell. Cromwell died; which smoothed the way for the call of Sir William Parr to the Lords, as earl of Essex, in the right of his wife. Cromwell's former manor of Wimbledon was settled upon Catherine. The stag never falls, but the ant who dug the pit that tripped his foot gets a shred of meat clinging to the bones, after the jungle cats and the birds that feed on death had crammed their maws and filled their crops.

The great men of Henry's official family fell often at a woman's will. Wolsey went, at Anne Boleyn's disfavor; More followed, at the same maid's doing. And now Cromwell was executed, with little Catherine Howard no whit dissenting, and still unwooed Catherine Parr playing her shrewd part in the fall.

Lord Latimer died early in 1543. Catherine Howard had gone to the block a year before. Latimer left to his wife, in his will, the manors of Nunmonkton and Hamerton; and left his body to be buried on the south side of the church of Well. He died a Catholic; and his body, since he did not die in Yorkshire, was interred in St. Paul's Cathedral.

And then a change came over the life of Catherine Parr. With her Catholic lord dead, she opened her ears to the fiery tones of the preachers of the Protestant reformation. They wooed her to the Protestant God, and she capitulated. Meanwhile, there were other wooers, less concerned with her soul than with her body and her goodly estates.

CHAPTER XXXI

A Learned Queen

CATHERINE PARR at this time was a pious Protestant, was highly educated, was lovely of body; and, above and beyond these, she held two rich unencumbered jointures. Sir Thomas Seymour, early in his second widowhood, sought her hand in marriage. Sir Thomas was brother of the late queen Jane; he was uncle to the infant heir of England; he was the handsomest and most admired bachelor at the king's court; and he stood high in Henry's eyes. Gay, magnificent, gallant, a paladin at spear and sword, and the beau ideal in attire of all the court, which slavishly followed his rich model. Most of all, he was a very Solomon with the ladies. This Don Juan, for whom the lightest court beauty ogled and angled in vain, looked with favor on the pious widow; and she, passing by the devout and the learned, saw in him her lover. The Seymours were leaders of the anti-clerical party at court; this no doubt pandered the two together. Sir Thomas came out of curiosity, and stayed out of desire. Catherine said openly that she had determined to become his wife.

She delayed the union, out of respect for her dead husband. And a new suitor entered upon the lists, a widower five times, the father of children by three of these marriages. Henry Tudor was his name; he was the king; and he had stalked about in gloom since his beloved Catherine Howard had been jockeyed away from him, by grasping ministers, who used her wanton's body as a pawn in their game of church against church.

Parliament had passed its celebrated law, rendering it a

capital offense for any lady who had lapsed from virtue to enter into marriage with her sovereign, unless she first fully apprised him of her downhill trip. This limited his choice to the available widows; for no spinster, were she as pure as nightfallen snow, would risk the king's satiated claim that her white spotlessness had been tracked by some night-prowler.

A widow . . . . Henry cast his eyes about, and they fell upon the exquisite, pious, learned relict of Lord Borough and Lord Latimer. He opened his heart to her, his great bloated hand toying with one of the broidered flowers above his vast swollen abdomen.

Her face blanched. "Your wives have not fared well, sire," she answered him outright. "I had rather be your mistress than your wife."

He looked her over approvingly. A straight-speaking wench. Well, he might have met her that way: her words promised no less. But he had supped full of mistresses. "No, madam, I look for you in the higher rôle."

She showed no enthusiasm. She loved Seymour; and this made her dull to the royal offer. Wyatt had once entered the lists against Henry, for Anne Boleyn's favor; but Seymour was of softer stuff. Henry had grown older, harsher, meaner; heads fell faster now. Discretion was the better part of longevity . . . . And so he gaily tra-la'd away; leaving Catherine Parr no way out but to relax her body to the assaults of this spoiled giant of a royal wooer.

Well, Henry grew on in years; no time to dilly-dally over the preliminary fol-de-rols. The arrangements were God-sped at a breathless rate; barely three months elapsed from the proving of Lord Latimer's will, to the hour when Cranmer granted the license for the royal marriage, "in whatever church, chapel, or oratory he (Henry) may please, without publication of banns, dispensing with all

ordinances to the contrary, for reasons concerning the honor and advancement of the whole realm." This was July 10, 1543.

Two days later, Catherine Parr laid by her widow's weeds, for the bridal robes of a queen of Albion. Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard had been mated at haste in hidden closets; this time, the eyes of the world were turned on the scene. Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, spoke the words, in the queen's closet at Hampton Court. The princesses Mary and Elizabeth, the lady Margaret Douglas, all assisted at the nuptials. The queen sister, Mistress Herbert, later countess of Pembroke, aided; as did the countess of Suffolk, the countess of Hertford, Lady Dudley . . . . The king was attended by his brother-in-law, the earl of Hertford, Lord John Russell, privy seal, Sir Anthony Browne, master of the pensioners, Henry Howard, Thomas D'Arcy, and many more.

She looked at her husband . . . . bloated body, racked with increasing disease and the onrush of premature old age. She thought once of the gay gallant, Sir Thomas Seymour. Once, and once only. She was queen of England now, and Henry's sixth mate . . . . It behooved her to walk delicately, like a cat on crockery.

On the day of the marriage, Queen Catherine—third queen of that name that this one king had bedded—presented her royal step-daughter and bridesmaid, Princess Mary, with a magnificent pair of gold bracelets set with rubies, and with the more acclaimed gift of twenty-five pounds in gold. The Princess Elizabeth had her gift too. Two months later, a similar gift in gold was made to Mary. Catherine knew how to win hearts . . . .

And she was a Protestant, this queen; which joyed the university of Cambridge, where the doctrines of the ref-

ormation were rooted and thriving. They overdid themselves in their congratulations to Henry upon the event. "Most learned queen," the great Roger Ascham, writing for the university, addressed her. She was a woman, as well as a queen; a scholar, as well as a woman.

Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, leader of the anti-papal Catholic party, was set against her from the start. The second week after the marriage, he set upon the reformers, attacking first a humble group of them at Windsor. The priest Anthony Persons, the chorister John Marbeck, and two more, led this movement. After certain spies had done their work, Gardiner moved the king in council that a commission be granted to search all the houses in Windsor, for books written in favor of the new learning. Henry acceded to this measure, excepting only the castle, his own royal residence, where he shrewdly suspected more works of the kind objected to existed, than among the poor unlearned of Windsor. This is the first deep bay, Catherine; the hounds are on your trail . . . . The hounds of God, seeking to mangle your body in Christ's name.

A few notes in manuscript dealing with the Bible, the beginning of a Latin Concordance, were found in Marbeck's house. This sent him and his three friends to the condemnation of death; though they would say no word incriminating the royal household. A high intercessor, perhaps the queen, presented Marbeck's case to the king. The one victim was reprieved; the rest went to the stake, hardly more than a fortnight after the royal nuptials.

Gardiner had just begun. Dr. Haines, dean of Exeter, Sir Philip Hoby and his wife, Sir Thomas Carden, and other members of the royal household, were placed under arrest. No evidence against them, except a few notes at the former trial, merely inferences and false statements. The queen learned of this surface plotting, and sent a trusted messenger to the king with proofs of it. Ockham, the guilty

clerk of the court, was arrested, and his papers seized, holding full proof of the anti-Protestant conspiracy. London and Symonds, Gardiner's two chief aids, were sent for and questioned under oath, were found guilty of perjury, and were sentenced to be placed on horseback with their faces to the horses' tails, with papers on their foreheads setting forth their perjuries. They were then placed in the pillory, at Windsor, where the king and queen were.

All of this in the honeymoon, the bridal month, of the new queen. Her family began to rise, as she had risen. Her uncle, Lord Parr of Horton, was named lord chamberlain; her sister, Lady Herbert, became a lady of the bedchamber; her stepdaughter, Margaret Neville, only daughter of her dead husband Lord Latimer, was named a maid of honor. Her brother, William Parr, already Baron Parr of Kendal, succeeded to Cromwell's title of earl of Essex. The Throckmorton boys, Clement, George, and the author of the chronicle, Sir Thomas, rose as well:

> First in the court my brother Clement served;
> A fee he had, the queen her cup to bring;
> And some supposed that I right well deserved,
> When sewer they saw me chosen to the king.
> My brother George, by valor in youth rare,
> A pension got and gallant halberd bare.

The queen's cup-bearer, the king's sewer, one of his pensioned halberdiers—great days for the Parrs and their kith!

One thing Catherine Parr the queen did early: to restore the princesses, Mary and Elizabeth, to their rightful place in the court, and to the succession. When Mary was ill, the queen sent her own litter to convey the princess to Ampthill, where the queen was residing with the king. On the New Year's Day after her marriage, the queen sent her footman Jacob with a present of a cheese for the princess Mary, who

rewarded the bearer with seven shillings and sixpence, as Mary's privy purse book shows. On another occasion it was a rich night-gown, sent to Mary in the hands of Fritton, keeper of the royal robes, who received fifteen shillings for his porterage. Mary embroidered a cushion with her own hands for the queen, and paid seven and sixpence to John Hayes for devising the pattern. They were of an age to have been close sisters, the queen and her stepdaughter; excelled in the same accomplishments; and were alike learned and studious. This aided in making them firm friends. The more brilliant Elizabeth had her talents drawn out by the queen; even Edward's studies were superintended by her. Edward, Elizabeth, and their young cousins, Lady Jane and Lady Catherine Grey, acquired from the queen a taste for classic literature, and some attachment to the principles of the reformation. And she kept at her needlework, this queen.

Henry was much in her company. Her caresses he prized, almost as much as he had prized little Catherine Howard's; for, after all, she was young still, and lovely, and skilled in keeping men's hearts, due to her double apprenticeship to other widowers. And, most of all, she could talk.

"Ay, it's grown to be a sorry land, Catherine, since I was a younker. We had giants then; giants who could sing like the morning stars."

Catherine pondered this well. It must never do not to understand just as it must never do to understand him too well.

"You mean the poets, sire?"

"Damn me, yes! We had good Master Skelton, then, and Wyatt, then, and I know not what others of equal shoulders to these twain. I was a poet, then, Catherine."

"So are you still, sire; but your poems are acts now, and no more windy vaporings. Besides, in this present hour—"

"Ugh, we have poets who, instead of beating the summons to love, beg us to flee it. There is Alexander Scott's doleful ditty—

> Love is one fervent fire,
> Kindled without desire,
> Short pleasure, long displeasure,
> Repentance is the hire;
> One poor treasure, without measure;
> Love is one fervent fire.

How does he proceed?

> Flee always from the snare.
> Learn at me to beware;
> It is one pain, and double train
> Of endless woe and care:
> For to refrain that danger plain
> Flee always from the snare.

Pish! Give me some of Master Wyatt's love songs, in God's name!"

"I like me the poems of young Surrey. Here is one I had writ out for me—" She fumbled among her papers, and found it. "This I call a real song:

> Give place, ye lovers, here before
> That spent your boasts and brags in vain;
> My lady's beauty passeth more
> The best of yours, I dare well sayen,
> Than doth the sun the candle light
> Of brightest day the darkest night . . . .
>
> Sith Nature thus gave her the praise,
> To be the chiefest work she wrought;
> In faith, methinks! some better ways
> On your behalf might well be sought,
> Than to compare, as ye have done,
> To match the candle with the sun.

This is a song, sire!"

"It passes well enough. But not such a poet as Wyatt was—as Skelton was. I doubt not but that Master Skelton is the greatest poet that man shall ever know. There is no poet living today who is worth the salt to season his butter."

She smiled quietly. " 'Gentle Mistress Custance, now, good Mistress Custance'—"

The king roared. "Score for the queen! Ay, that damned schoolman can do it! 'Mirth with modesty'—is it not so *Ralph Roister Doister* preludes? The Etonian set my belly to shaking. That scene where Tibet Talkapace dallies with the amorous Ralph— You know, where she says to him, 'I pray you, when did you last kiss your cow?' You mind that? And then she tells him she has not been taught to kissing and licking. True talk, that," he grew sober. "Most maids are sadly untaught in that. Catherine Howard, of course— But she had unusual opportunities. You were quick to learn, my dear."

"With such a teacher—" Eyes cast demurely down. All men could be handled so.

"And what he says about music!" The king expanded, like a bud surprised with July " 'Twang with—' Oh, here it is:" Head thrown back, he declaimed:

> Then up to our lute at midnight, twangledom twang,
> Then twang with our sonnets, and twang with our dumps,
> And heigho from our heart, as heavy as lead lumps;
> Then to our recorder with toodleloodle poop,
> As the owlet out of an ivy bush should whoop.
> Anon to our gittern, thrumpledum, thrumpledum,
> Thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum thrum—

"There's poetry for you. Every instrument, caught to the life! I near split when that 'toodleloodle poop' pierced my

ears the first time! Then where Ralph is after the scribbler—

> Yes, for although he had as many lives
> As a thousand widows, and a thousand wives,
> As a thousand lions, and a thousand rats,
> A thousand wolves, and a thousand cats,
> A thousand bulls, and a thousand calves,
> And a thousand legions divided in halves,
> He shall never 'scape death on my sword's point,
> Though I should be torn therefor joint by joint.

By God, that's got the ring to it! Of course, more slowly, Master Skelton did better; but this is most like him, of our ailing later days. Ay, you scored there, Catherine; Udal is a poet. You have queened it well. My heart burst with pride, when you let the Spanish duke de Nejara come to you at Westminster. I have more for you to do."

"Your majesty's faintest wish is the law of my land," with a lovely nod.

"I will open it to you tomorrow. For this night, this much: I purpose to go in person to France, and skirr the Frenchies out—and to leave you king in my stead."

The queen's eyes widened with delight. A respite, at least . . . .

CHAPTER XXXII

One Last Campaign

CATHERINE HOWARD was a smaller woman than this Catherine; but she was hardly fairer. The Parr heiress had small and delicate features, hazel eyes, and golden hair, of the hue that Henry prized most. Her hair was worn folded in simple Madonna bands, under a round crimson velvet hood, empearled, and bound with a band of gold set with rubies and pearls, from which a long black veil declined over her shoulders. This was the hood that the queen before her had brought in from France, and that all the court chose now. She was small in form, and from her tiny toes to her brilliant complexion she was a Westmoreland beauty, every inch of her.

She had joyed the king's heart with her "The Lamentations of a Sinner," in words that sang hardly less brightly than More's own words. Henry's own copy was heavily underscored, where her majesty spoke of her king:

> Thanks be given to the Lord that He hath now sent us such a godly and learned king, in these latter days, to reign over us, that, with the force of God's word, hath taken away the veils and mists of errors, and brought us to the knowledge of the truth by the light of God's word, which was so long hid and kept under, that the people were well-nigh famished and hungered for lack of spiritual food—such was the charity of the spiritual curates and shepherds.

"Charity" was underscored in the king's own writing, with an explosive "Bah" writ beside it.

> But our Moses, and most godly wise governor and king, that hath delivered us out of the captivity and

> spiritual bondage of Pharaoh—I mean by this Moses, King Henry VIII, my most sovereign favourable lord and husband, one (if Moses had figured any more than Christ), through the excellent grace of God, meet to be another expressed verity of Moses' conquest over Pharaoh (and I mean by this Pharaoh the bishop of Rome), who hath been, and is, a greater persecutor of all true Christians than ever was Pharaoh of the children of Israel.

The book told of her own abhorrence of her former faith, the Romish belief; it counselled women to serve their lords and husbands, as if another Paul spoke; it stood against marriage of the priesthood; in every way it was foursquare with Pope Henry's English doctrines. Such a woman was to be trusted.

This was early in 1544; and Henry caused his complacent Parliament to settle the royal succession on any children he might have by her, in case of the decease of the prince, Edward, without issue. In this act, Henry treats four of his marriages—those with Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Anne of Cleves, and Catherine Howard—as absolute nullities, and acknowledges only two queens out of the six—Jane Seymour and the present incumbent. Catherine failing heirs, after the death of Edward without children, the succession is to go to Mary, and then to Elizabeth, Mary's line failing; but their mother's names are not mentioned, lest the king seem to reverse his former decrees. The purpose of this act, as it explains, is that the king is about to undertake a voyage royal, in his most royal person, into the realm of France, against the French king.

Previous to embarking, Henry named Catherine to govern in his absence, by the style and title of queen-regent of England and Ireland. She was girdled with a council allied to the reformation party: the earl of Hertford, named her

lieutenant, ordered to reside in the court and be ever attendant on the queen's person; Cranmer; Sir William Petre; Lord Parr of Horton; Wriothesley; and the bishop of Winchester. Catherine Parr was the first queen of England on which this title was ever conferred. She entered upon her high office by composing a prayer:

> O Almighty King and Lord of Hosts, ... our cause now being just, and being enforced to enter into war and battail, we most humbly beseech thee . . . . so to turn the hearts of our enemies to the desire of peace, that no Christian blood be spilt. Or else grant, O Lord, that with small effusion of blood and little damage of innocents, we may to thy glory obtain victory.

All for the glory of the English god . . . .

On July 14, 1544, Henry crossed from Dover to Calais, in a ship winged with cloth of gold. Eleven days later he took the field in person, armed at all points, mounted on a great steed, and so rode forth from Calais at the head of a princely train. Sir William Herbert, the queen's brother-in-law, bore the royal head-piece and spear, followed by the royal henchmen. The earl of Essex, Catherine's brother, was chief captain of the men-at-arms. The next day, Henry appeared before Boulogne, and took over the command. The duke of Albuquerque, general of the Spanish allies, encamped beyond the town, acting always under directions from Henry, who captained the siege.

Loving letters came to Henry from his regent spouse. His replies bristled with the details of the fighting:

> At the closing up of these our letters this day, the castle before named with the dyke is at our command, and not like to be recovered by the Frenchmen again (as we trust), not doubting, with God's grace, but that the castle and town will shortly follow the same trade, for as this day, which is the

> eighth of September, we begin three batteries, and have three more going, besides one which hath done his execution, in shaking and tearing off one of their greatest bulwarks.

Meanwhile, in London, the queen and the royal children were at Oking; and the plague then raging caused her to take unusual precautions that no exposed person come near the court. Her head would not have been worth a ha'penny ale, if aught ill had befallen the heir Edward.

Boulogne surrendered to Henry after a fierce siege; the triumphal entry taking place on the 18th of September. The queen's thanksgiving at this event was her last public act as regent; for the king returned to his realm on October 1st, when to his disgust he ascertained that his Spanish allies had contracted a separate peace with Francis. Catherine had governed so well, that there were no complaints from either side. A public house was set up in London to commemorate the victory, with the name "Boulogne Gate." In a few years, the short memories of the people had altered this to the simpler title of "Bull and Gate." The wise old men who gathered at this tavern told how the name had originated: how there had been a great red bull, who gored men, women, and children; and who, pursued by men-at-arms, had leapt at the highest gate in London, then standing nearby, and had become impaled upon its heights. It was so that the name came, the wise men explained . . . .

Master Hans Holbein had been sent for, to paint the royal family, that all men might forever have its beauty preserved. He worked diligently at the canvas, and ended it, to Henry's great joy. Here is Henry enthroned beneath his canopy of state, in a picture blazing with gold. The king's gown, of scarlet and gold brocade, is girded to his waist with a white satin sash, half hiding all but the hilt of a jewelled dagger. The skirts of the gown are short, full,

gold-edged. It is slashed on the breast, in five or six rows, with puffs of white satin, bound with gold clasps. Over this he wears a great twisted collar of pearls, with rubies studding them; a dalmatic with hanging sleeves, lined with sables, and edged with pearls, flung over a shoulder. His black velvet hat wears its white plume, low drooping, at a rakish angle, amid the inevitable pearls. His hose and shoes are of white satin. The right arm rounds the body of the prince, Edward.

Edward, eight years old, beautiful of face and form, wears a crimson velvet cap, and is dressed in dark red damask, gold-striped, narrow-belted at the waist. The skirt is full, and descends below the knees; the hose and shoes are of scarlet.

To the two sides are the two princesses, entering, as if to offer filial homage to the royal group. Each wears the round hood of crimson velvet, in the style brought by Catherine Howard from France. The princesses are dressed alike, in kirtles or gowns of rich crimson velvet, long-sleeved, ruffled at the ends, and slashed with puffs of white satin. Flowing robes of gold brocade are worn over these, with low sleeves and sweeping trains. Elizabeth is tall, full-proportioned, lovely, as she was in girlhood; she looks the woman already. Mary, the elder, is smaller, more delicate in form and feature, wearing that badge of melancholy which sickness and premature sorrow have given her.

At the left hand of Henry sits his consort. Not Catherine Parr, but Jane Seymour, Edward's mother. There is no life in her face or form. Her expression is as rigid and inanimate, as if she were a corpse lately taken from her cerecloths, to be royally clad and set among the living. A wax effigy of this queen was carried at her funeral; beyond doubt, Master Holbein has used this as his model. She wears the pointed cloth-of-gold hood, which she wore in

life, long outdated now by the low French hood that Mistress Howard brought back with her from France.

The hair of all in the picture is golden, as if, toward the twilight of Henry's reign, God had scattered the gold on His palette on every head in England. This was Henry's favored color; and a yellow powder simulated it, where God nodded at His task of satisfying wholly His English vicar.

Catherine the queen may not have relished being left out of this, in deference to a dead predecessor; but she was a queen of tact. Better keep her crown on her head, than risk it by some whim now . . . .

For there was constant danger at court. Part of this came from the constant presence of one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber, one Sir Thomas Seymour, who had wooed her before Henry's blearing eyes fell upon her. Sir Thomas was always at hand; and he, and she, the queen knew well, moved in a net of spies, too apt to carry to hating ears the slightest indiscreet word, or glance even, of the Protestant queen. Seymour, beau gallant as he was, was rash, inconsistent, selfish. Where he sought to be an intriguer, he was ever blundering. He had got from the king the spoils of certain abbeys; had squandered this; and wished for more. So he took himself to Henry, and accused Cranmer of wasting his revenues, and stinting all hospitality, to gather riches for his wife and children, rather than let any profits go to his majesty.

Henry listened, and said nothing. A fortnight later, while Sir Thomas Seymour was holding the basin for the king to lave his hands, his majesty said, "Go you out of hand to my lord of Canterbury, and bid him be with me at two o'clock, and fail not."

Seymour went to Lambeth, and found the great hall set for dinner, with the usual hospitality toward. "Sit you down

and dine," said Cranmer genially. Seymour saw through the king's motive now, as the dinner unfolded with all the old opulence of the archbishops. He delivered his message, and posthasted back to the king.

"Ho!" roared Henry, "dined you not with my lord of Canterbury?"

Sir Thomas saw the cloud on the royal brows. Falling on his knees, he retracted utterly what he had said of Cranmer's housekeeping. "There is no hall so honorably set in the realm, save only your majesty's."

The king loosed the vials of his displeasure then. He had given liberally of the suppressed monasteries to Seymour; and this had been unthriftily spent, at dice, gay apparel, or somewhat worse; and only his greedy appetite dictated his suggestion of further confiscation of churchly wealth.

This was Seymour; the queen was far different. She was no spendthrift; and she was caution and tact at all points. She had Miles Coverdale named her almoner, and gave him every aid in his translation of the Bible. The learned Nicholas Udal, master of Eton, whose comedy had so pleased his majesty, was employed by the queen to edit the translations of paraphrases of the four gospels, by Erasmus. The first edition of this was published in 1545, at the sole expense of the queen. Udal, in his dedication to this book, rejoiced at the altered demeanor of the young maidens of the land. "It is a common thing to see young virgins so nuzzled and trained in the study of letters, that they willingly set all other pastimes at naught, for learning's sake."

"True talk," grunted Henry, eying it unfavorably, "and a pox on such lifeless folk! Why, when I was a lad, a maid would sooner be tumbled, than wear out her pretty eyes poring over Latin and Greek. What are maids made

for?" he demanded fiercely of Wriothesley, and the others beside him.

"Your majesty is our senior at that," smirked the courtier.

"I am right, then. A man is made to fight, to think, to rule the world, to speak the word of God; a woman, to be tupped. Slip a pinch out of one of these scurvy maids today, and you might as well woo a louse! 'Grant me your charity, mistress,' you say. 'What think you of this use of *oti?*' she asks you. 'Do you tumble, in God's name?' you demand. 'I am at the fifth declension,' she replies. A pox on learned maids!"

The maids had turned to scholards; and the scholards were ever known to be eunuchs. God had grown like an overcharged gun, that kicked Himself backward every time He spoke. And, worst lash of all, the king was picked as clean as an anted mouse; his purse was a gap, a gulch, an abysm. Not even a coronation for this new queen; the foul moneylenders even dared demand some of their earlier credits, and devil a ha'penny would they lend him now. The foul scurvy rot such a mishearted world!

The queen received a queen's dowry; for it was a comfort to her that she still drew the incomes from the estates of Borough and Latimer, her two first husbands.

Well, Henry had to have money. If the filthy Holdpennies would not ungap their purse-strings, there were other devices. Item, Henry first raised the named value of the coinage of the realm: that clipped a few pounds off the gold sovereigns. Item, out came a new coinage, with the alloy having all the majority over the silver. Europe shut its markets to England at this: the national credit was as low as the king's; but the king had squeezed his ha'penny out of it.

In the autumn of 1545, Henry demanded the assistance

of Parliament. Now this Parliament, like his others, would have spread wide the honor of their wives and daughters to their rutting roaring lord; but the most they could grant did not glut the gaping king. A new thought. Item, the king had Parliament turn over to him the revenues of all the hospitals and colleges in England. What were the needs of the sick and the unlearned, when the king craved pence?

Cambridge felt that this spoilation would ruin them. They appealed to the queen. She interceded, and had her way. She wrote them at length that "his highness being such a patron to good learning, doth tender so much, that he would rather advance learning, and erect new occasion thereof, than confound your ancient and godly institutions." This was "scribbled with the rude hand of her that prayeth to the Lord and immortal God to send you all prosperous success in godly learning and knowledge."

And then she went back to the mountain of diseased flesh that was her king and her lawful husband.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A Royal Doe in View

A MAN sows corn in a field; and if neither the earth has resowed a foul spilth of tares, nor God's birds dropped evil seeds upon it, nor the printing beasts shaken from their shaggy hides the germs of shouldering ills, it is corn that grows there: fine upstanding corn, to strain his bins, tire his mills, and cram the maws of the land's hungry. A man may sow his own seed in a thousand maids of trulls, and, if he take heed to avoid the plague, and live otherwise well and hale, he may stand like an oak at the end, and leap like an old stag who still lords it over his herd. If a man fills his belly with packed haunches of venison and gammons of pork, with sides of beef and vast pasties of veal and mutton and the birds of the air, and wash the whole down with galloning floodtides of ale and wine that never know neap, and add to these naught of the balsam sleep, but a constant tupping and tumbling of trollop and what not, he will garner his tares in a black hour, and be none the happier for his swollen estate. It was so with Henry the king.

There was the plague . . . . bodily torture, disquiet of mind, a gradual rotting away of his manhood and his life's core. There was the dropsy, which swelled him nigh to bursting like a watered puffball. He was grown fat, unwieldy, incapable of the slightest exercise—this body that once leapt moats and drew the best bow in England, that excelled at joust and barriers over all the knights of Christendom. He could not even jostle a lordling or cosset a doxy with pleasure. Once he could seize Francis of France

in a bearhug, and fling him like a lesser Antaeus upon his old mother's stern bosom; now he had no more motion in him than a hill of tallow, a mountain of dripping suet. He could not be moved to an upper chamber, without the aid of machinery. For all the noble swivet that had once been breath to his nostrils, there now remained but an itching conscience and a frayed impatience, that was like to send him momently into a frenzy.

Catherine Parr, the queen, was as fit for this as for the stripped sport of couching and sporting. She had nursed two widowers, her husbands, before this, on their deathbeds; she knew what infinite store of patience and overlookingness the role demanded. For hours she was on her knees at his side, applying fomentations and other balms to his ulcered leg. So gentle was she in this office, that he would not let any other do this for him. His mind twitched with unrest: and, since it was jaded toward inactivity of its own, she sought to voyage it away from its unease by calling to his attention the hopeful progress and promise in his studies of the beloved heir, the prince Edward.

Over came the plenipotentiaries of France, in the opening of 1546, to lighten the court with its last twilight upblazing before the night came. Claude d'Annebaut, the very admiral who had so recently descended on the Isle of Wight and set upon the English fleet there, was the ambassador extraordinary on this occasion. He landed at Greenwich, and was received with great pomp by a great cavalcade of nobles, knights, and gentlemen, headed by the young heir of England, only in his ninth year, who was mounted on a great charger, and welcomed the admiral and his suite in a gracious manner. Annebaut embraced and kissed the princely boy, and all the French were loud in their laud of the gallant beauty and bearing of the heir. The young prince conducted the ambassador to Hampton Court, where the

king and queen feasted and entertained him magnificently for ten days. Henry gave Catherine, on this occasion, jewels of great price, that she might appear as his consort should.

The court party against the reformation observed this waxing of Catherine's influence with alarm. Wriothesley, lord chancellor now, who had suggested to Henry that he put by Anne of Cleves, and who had harried Catherine Howard to her death, waited but his hour to do as much for this wife. Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, was one with Wriothesley in this chase.

But their quarry was difficult to near, so blameless was her every act. Only one avenue lay open. Her private life was beyond reproach, in spite of her former lover's nearness in court. But her religious opinions, akin to the reformation, could hardly stomach Henry's attempts to set up the dogma of his own infallibility in matters religious, to counter the pope's same claim. Every dissent from Henry's attitude in faith had been visited with red penalties. In his last speech to Parliament, he had grown bitter at the divisions in religion, which distracted his realm, for which he partly blamed the priests, he said:

> some of whom were so stiff in their old *mumpsimus,* and others so busy with their *sumpsimus,* that, instead of preaching the word of God, they were employed in railing at each other.

Part of the fault, he said, lay in the laity, who spent their time reviling preachers, priests, and even bishops. He called on all to report any preaching of perverse doctrine. He continued:

> I am very sorry to know, and hear how irreverently that precious jewel, the Word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung, and jangled in every alehouse and tavern, contrary to the true meaning and doctrine of the same.

This speech was the prelude to the strict enforcement of the six articles. In the spring and summer of 1546, the young, beautiful, and learned Anne Askew fell afoul of this persecution. Her husband, Mr. Kyme, of Lincolnshire, had driven her from her home for her espousal of the reformation. The queen's sister, Lady Herbert, the duchess of Suffolk, and other shining court ladies, favored the fair gospeller; the queen herself received books from her, in the presence of Lady Herbert, Lady Tyrwhit, and young Lady Jane Grey—which might open the queen's self to prosecution for reading heretical works. Anne Askew might have been forgiven, for her youth and beauty, as well as her high connections; but she was culled out, as a means of uprooting the young royal tree, Catherine herself.

In prison Anne Askew was supported by money supposed to come from ladies of the queen's bedchamber. All of Wriothesley's vindictive zeal sought to wrest from her the names of these donors. When Sir Anthony Knevet, lieutenant of the Tower, sought to modify the ferocious orders of the blood-thirsty chancellor, his lordship threw off his gown, and with the aid of his ruthless accomplice Rich worked the rack himself, till Anne's joints were almost plucked asunder.

Knevet, outraged at this usurpation of his authority, took boat at once, and proceeded to the king, to relate to him the wretched scene.

Henry spoke great displeasure that a female should meet such indignity. But he had no word of punishment for Wriothesley or Rich; and he did not interpose his word to save Anne Askew from death by fire.

Even this did not shake the young martyr's zeal. It was strange, the wise men of the court said, how martyrs, Catholic and Protestant alike, sought torture and death as a bride seeks her bridegroom; as if ecstasy came to them only in

suffering. Along with her, among those condemned to die were William Morice, the king's gentleman usher, and Sir George Blagge, of the privy chamber, whom the king loved, and was wont to call in endearment "his pig."

In a little parlor by Newgate the sad party of victims and their friends were gathered. Sir George Blagge was with Lascells, a gentleman of Nottinghamshire, at Gatford, near Worksop. Lascells was there, and another condemned victim, a priest named Belenian. Three of the Throckmortons, including Sir Nicholas, were present. Some one said to these three, "You are all marked men that come to these. Take heed to your lives."

The Throckmortons were near relatives of the queen, and members of the royal household. In spite of the warning, they came to comfort Anne Askew in prison. When she was borne to her funeral pyre, in Smithfield, the same intrepid brothers came to her. Again they were warned, "You are marked men." They were made to withdraw, this time. And then came Wriothesley, Russell, and others of the anti-reformation clique, to gloat over the intended victim, and to tempt her constancy by offering her the king's pardon, if she would recant. She treated the proposal with a scorn which heartened the three men beside her.

When Henry learned of his pig's condemnation, he sent for Wriothesley, not at all pleased. "You come close to me, my lord, even to my privy chamber."

"I knew that your majesty would approve all putting down of this vicious heresy—"

"I shrewdly misdoubt your motive. Draw up a pardon at once for Sir George Blagge."

Blagge, released, rushed to the king's side.

"Ah, my pig! Are you here safe again?"

"Yes, sire. But if your majesty had not been better than your bishops, your pig had been roasted to ham by now."

Gardiner, all saw, was bending his bow to bring down some of the head deer. The queen was the doe he was tracking. The queen's sister, Lady Herbert, was secretly denounced to Henry as active in undermining the edict touching heretical works.

The queen had been wont, in her hours of domestic privacy with her husband, to talk with him touching theology. Her ready wit and eloquence gave piquancy to these discussions. The king was at first amused and delighted; but controversies between husband and wife, where the former has all power, and the second gets the better of the argument, are dangerous sport. On lesser matters, Catherine might have had tact to grant victory to her lord. But his body and soul, she saw, labored under incurable maladies; if she could not save the first, she might aid in cleansing the second, before its summons to the sessions of the Last Judgment.

And his testiness was greatened by a painful burning in his ulcered leg, which bound him to his chamber. Catherine pressed her speech too shrewdly. The king tired of yielding, and cut the matter short. The queen spoke pleasantly on other matters, and withdrew. Henry's bottled anger broke out as she left the room. "A sweet sound it is, when women become such clerks; and much to my comfort to come, in mine old age, to be lessoned by my wife!"

Gardiner was at his side; and this word was his cue. He hinted certain matters concerning her majesty, which a few days before he could not have breathed to the king.

"Sire," said Gardiner smoothly, "it is known to all that your majesty excels the princes of this, and every other, age, as well as all the professed doctors of divinity, touching matters of man's bounden duty to God. It is unseemly for any of your subjects to argue with your majesty, so malapertly as the queen has just done."

Henry brooded on this in silence. Gardiner took this to be encouragement.

"Your loving courtiers grieve to hear this done. For those who are bold in words do not scruple to proceed next to acts of disobedience."

Henry sighed. "It may well be so."

"But for the queen's powerful party, sire, I could myself make discoveries to your ear."

"Against the queen?"

The minister nodded. "We must have your leave, sire."

Henry mused. After all, the bitch had touched him near, in disputing his words concerning God. He turned savagely to the other. "Have it your way. Draw you up articles against the queen, even though it touch her life, if your matters come so near her."

Shrewd still, they proceeded first, under the six articles, against Lady Herbert, Lady Jane Grey, and Lady Tyrwhit, all of the queen's chamber. They searched the closets and coffers of these ladies, seeking something against the queen. If aught was found, she was to be taken and carried by night, in a barge, to the Tower. This much Gardiner told the king; this much the king acceded to.

So cleverly was this conveyed, that the queen had no slimmest hint of it all. Just as the plot neared its crest, Wriothesley hied himself carelessly through the gallery at Whitehall, so that a paper fell from his bosom, unnoted by him. This paper was the bill of articles against the queen, and the mandate for her arrest, with the king's royal signature already affixed.

One of the queen's attendants saw the falling paper, picked it up, made sure of its contents, and hurried with it to the queen.

Surely her fidelity, her kindliness, her constant care, had endeared her to his majesty. But she had not given him

issue, as she had not given issue to either of her former husbands; which might justly cause the reproach of barrenness to be affixed against her. The very settlement of the succession on her heirs, after death of prince Edward without issue, contained the ominous clause, setting the precedence in the succession, in default of issue by her, over his first two daughters "to the children he might have by any other queen." Evidently this was not wholly out of his mind . . . .

There were weapons Catherine Parr had: her fidelity, her kindliness, her constant care, her brilliant learning. One would think that, in this emergency, she would seek to woo the ailing old lion by a display of sweet erudition. No: she returned to simple woman. She fell at once into a hysterical agony. Her apartment was beside that of the sick king; and she fell here from one fit into another, her shrieks and cries piercing his ears. Hour after hour . . . .

Moved with pity, or disquieted by the din, the sick king sent to inquire what was ill.

Catherine's physician, Dr. Wendy, sent word that the queen was dangerously ill, and that it appeared that her sickness was caused by distress of mind.

Henry had been confined for two days to his bed already; and, after all, she was an invaluable nurse, however he might wish to dispute with her as a theological tutor. He determined to pay her a visit. He could not walk; he had to be portered in a chair into Catherine's apartment. He found her sad, almost at the point of death apparently; this called forth sympathy from him, as if he really feared to lose her. The hysterics of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard had not so moved him; but this was a woman shrewd in dealing with ailing husbands, and she measured her wails with effective skill.

She spoke her utter gratitude for the visit, and told his

majesty that mere sight of him had greatly revived and rejoiced her. She had been distressed, she continued adroitly, at seeing so little of his majesty of late; she feared, indeed, that she had unwittingly given some cause of offense to him.

The king relented and relaxed. He was all graciousness, all good will. Throughout the interview, she was so humble and endearing, so complementary to his mood, that, in the burst of his reacting feelings, Henry unbared to her physician the plot against the queen's life. This prudent man acted as mediator with his king, and suggested to the queen the proper approach to the troubled king.

The next evening, the queen was recovered enough to return the king's visit to his bedchamber. She came attended by her sister and the king's young niece, Lady Jane Grey, who bore the candles before her majesty. Henry welcomed her courteously, took her visit in good grace, and adroitly turned the conversation to the old subject of theological controversy, as if to test her mood.

The candles flickered at this.

Catherine smiled humbly. "I am but a woman, accompanied with all the imperfections natural to the weakness of my sex. Therefore, in all matters of doubt and difficulty, I must refer myself to your majesty's better judgment, as to my lord and head. For so God has appointed you as the supreme head of us all; and of you, next unto God, will I always learn."

"Not so, by St. Mary," the king tested further. "You are become a doctor, Kate, to instruct us, and not to be instructed by us. We have seen this often in the past."

"Indeed," replied the queen softly, "if your majesty has so conceived, my meaning has been mistaken. For I have always held it preposterous for a woman to instruct her lord. If I have ever presumed to differ with your highness on religion, it was partly to obtain information for my own

comfort, regarding certain nice points on which I stood in doubt; and sometimes because I perceived that, in talking, you were better able to pass away the pain and weariness of your present infirmity, which encouraged me to this boldness, in the hope of profiting by your majesty's learned discourse, in addition."

"And is it so, sweetheart?" He smiled; the world sang again. "Then we are perfect friends."

He kissed her with much tenderness, and gave her leave to depart.

On the day named for her arrest, the convalescent king sent for the queen to take the air with him in the garden. Her sister, Lady Jane Grey, and Lady Tyrwhit were beside her.

Lord chancellor Wriothesley, with forty of the guard, entered the garden. He came to carry the queen off to the Tower. The king had conveyed to him no word of his altered mood.

Henry glowered upon him, as a great sheep-dog stares down a louse. "You beast," he began; "you fool, you knave, you arrant zany! On a fine mission you are here!"

Catherine stood silent, heart quivering with thankfulness.

The king bullied the chancellor away from his nearness to her majesty. "Avaunt from my presence, you thing of naught!"

Then Catherine showed herself the queen she was. "Sire," she said timidly, "let me become a humble suitor for him, as I am sure his fault was occasioned by error."

"Ah, poor soul," said the king affectionately, "you little know, Kate, how evilly he has deserved this grace at your hands. On my word, sweetheart, he has been to you a very knave!"

The king made it clear to his wife, that, if she willed it,

blood would flow for this fault. This much Henry did, at her pleading: he overlooked the offense of Wriothesley. With Gardiner, it was different. Henry struck the bishop's name off his council book, and forbade him to again enter near the royal presence.

A while later, on the terrace at Windsor, when the colleagues came near the king and his queen, Gardiner walked among them.

Henry turned fiercely to the chancellor. "Did I not command you that he should come no more among you?"

"My lord of Winchester," said Wriothesley smoothly, "has come to wait upon your highness, with the offer of a gift from his clergy."

That was a mare of a different hue. Money never came amiss, to the gaping royal coffers. Henry condescended to hear the address, and to accept the bribe. But he took no further notice of the bishop, and indeed at once struck his name off the list of the king's executors. The name of Thirlby, bishop of Westminster, went at the same time; "I'll have none of Gardiner's schoolboys either," said the king. "As well be done with troublemakers now, while I still live."

CHAPTER XXXIV

Every Tale Has an End

ONE was coming nearer to the king than any had been before; and, not liking the shrouded face of this visitor, he clung closer to the one living who was apt to humor his wildest sick whims. In the very presence of the lords and ladies in waiting, Henry would bid his sweetheart come beside him, and he would lay his sore leg upon her lap for hours at a stretch. He even did this in view of the whole court.

The queen was still young, tiny, pretty. Yet she showed no resentment at these queer marks of royal favor. Up to now, she had abstained from the intrigues of the church parties about the court. Now, since one group were after her, she quietly set herself on the side of the reformation group. The Seymours, her brother, the earl of Essex, and Lord Herbert, her sister's husband, were high in this party. The Seymours hated the great house of Howard. Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, the high-spirited heir of Norfolk, in whose veins flowed the blood of Charlemagne and the Plantagenets, did not hide his dislike of the new nobility. He rashly vaunted that he waited his moment to avenge some insolence of the earl of Hertford. And the king was ill, and the Seymours in power. So they brought charges against the shining peer, in the world of blood and of English letters alike . . . .

One of the wild charges brought against Surrey, aimed to disquiet the queen, was that he had conceived the monstrous project of marrying his sister, the beautiful dowager-duchess of Richmond, widow of the king's reputed son

Henry, duke of Richmond, to the king himself. Again a woman turned on her own blood. Surrey had persuaded his father to prevent this sister's marriage with the admiral Sir Thomas Seymour, whom she loved. And so she turned on her brother, deposing that he had instructed her how to behave herself, so as to obtain private interviews with the king, and so endear himself in his favor, that she might rule England as others had done.

And Henry had already bedded two of the Howard blood. This charge of group marriage with the whole Howard womanhood worried the people, and troubled the jealous queen.

Surrey, the poet, still had his golden voice in his cell in Windsor:

> So cruel prison how could betide, alas!
> As proud Windsor? Where I in lust and joy,
> With a king's son, my childish years did pass,
> In greater feasts than Priam's sons of Troy.

He tells of the sports:

> The palm-play, where despoiled for the game,
> With dazed eyes oft we by gleams of love
> Have missed the ball, and got sight of our dame,
> To bate her eyes, which kept the leads above.
> The gravelled ground, with sleeves tied on the helm,
> On foaming horse, with swords and friendly hearts;
> With cheer, as though one should another whelm,
> Where we have fought, and chased oft with darts.

Then to the woodland pleasures:

> The wild forest, the clothes holts with green;
> With reins availed, and swiftly-breathed horse,
> With cry of hounds and merry blasts between,
> Where we did chase the fearful hart of force.

And then a return to the king's dead son, his "frère" or brother:

Echo, alas! that does my sorrow rue,
Returns thereto a hollow sound of plaint.
Thus I alone, where all my freedom grew,
In prison pine with bondage and restraint.
And with remembrance of the greater grief,
To banish the less, I find my chief relief.

This, if anything, would move Henry's heart: this tribute to his loved dead son. It was too late.

Anne Boleyn had once sought to arrange a marriage between Surrey and the princess Mary. She had had one of the two chief poets of Henry's reign for her lover; she sought the other for her husband's son-in-law. That was all gone now. She had actually married him to Lady Frances de Vere, of the great house of Oxford. Surrey himself had been earl marshal at the trial of Anne Boleyn and Lord Rochford. All gone now . . . . He had been a royal champion, a knight of the Garter, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, grand seneschal of the university of Cambridge, twice imprisoned for altercations, under charges for window-breaking and Lent-breaking, field-marshal of the English forces before Montreuil, lieutenant-governor of the English possessions on the continent, governor of Boulogne . . . . Gone now . . . .

On the 19th of January, 1547, Surrey was beheaded. Henry lay on his death-bed. His swollen hands could no longer guide the pen; a stamp with a facsimile of the "H. R." was instead affixed, in the king's presence. The same method was used for the death-warrant of the old duke of Norfolk, Surrey's father. The aged nobleman was husband of Anne Plantagenet, the king's maternal aunt; he had been uncle of two of Henry's queens, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. On the evening of the 26th of January, Henry, as the last act of his life, dispatched a messenger to the Tower, to order the execution of Norfolk. Before the

duke died according to this, there was a bloated fat corpse in the royal palace . . . .

Catherine the queen heard from the physicians that the last hour approached. Her heart lifted. It had been no joy to be mated to this diseased mountain of a king. When he died . . . . Oh, he would be obstinate, and live still—no doubt of that. But, if he died! There was Sir Thomas Seymour, her lover still, still unwed, with his guarded whispers in her ear that it was for her sake he had gone mateless. If Henry died, he would plague her—and her heart had surrendered already to his assaults. That first . . . .

Lady Jane Grey, Dorset's daughter, must be wedded to Edward the next king. They were cousins, both highly bred, both under her thumb. That would not be difficult to contrive . . . .

As for Elizabeth, the princess, it could not be true what the gossips whispered—that Sir Thomas Seymour, the admiral, had boasted privily that he would wed her yet. She had come upon him playing with the little princess more than once; it was nothing. There could be no ill there. No, the admiral was hers . . . . Courtier, poet, man . . . .

Ay, she would really be the queen to the last. With Seymour at her side, and Edward and Lady Jane under her thumb . . . . Her head ached, a drowsy numbness held her members. She must rouse herself, and go in to the bedside of the dying king, as she had done for the two months gone, during the torrid heat of his fever. No, she could not bring herself to take the steps from this chamber to that. First she could lie down for a half hour, and then . . . . She lay down, and merciful sleep smoothed away her cares.

The physicians studied the failing body of the king, and announced to those in attendance on the king that the hour of his departure was at hand. Who was to break this black

word to the king, and gain his last vented ill will? Well, here's Sir Anthony Denny, who cares not for royal ire.

He approached the bed, leaned over it. "Sire, all human aid is now in vain. It is meet for you to review your past life, and seek for God's mercy through Christ."

Henry had been uttering loud cries of pain and impatience. He ceased these, half lifted his throbbing aching body, and curled his stern eyebrows upon the dauntless courtier. "What judge has sent you to pass this sentence upon me?"

Denny bowed. "Your physicians, sire. There is no appeal from their judgment."

The physicians came near the royal patient, medicine in hand.

"Get from me!" the royal bull roared, weakly now. "After judges have once passed sentences upon a criminal, they have no more to do with him. Therefore, begone!"

Criminal . . . . His eyes glared evilly. There was the matter of maids he had taken, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth Taillebois, and many more . . . . There was the good queen Catherine of Aragon put aside, and his princess by her bastardized . . . . There was sweet fond Anne Boleyn sent to the block, and adorable Catherine Howard, with her tantalizing tricks of love, sent to . . . . God, if this dreadful aching would ever respite for a moment! There was that poor fool, Anne the mare from Aragon—No, it was not Aragon; the mare from . . . . No matter, Anne the mare, whom he had put away. There was a paler shade standing accusingly beside his bed: "Why did you drive me to my death, who bore you a son, Henry?"

"Get from me!" he shrieked, at the thronging shadows.

The frightened courtiers withdrew.

Well, Catherine Parr had her head on yet. Presumptuous bitch, to dare to argue with him as to God's will! He

was God's voice; he was God's will; he was God . . . . God riven with the plague, swollen with the dropsy, God dying alone in his horrid chamber of more horrid memories . . . .

"Damn you," a bleat rather than a roar, "I bid you stay at my side."

The trembling courtiers came back. "Would your majesty like to see your divines?"

The king groaned, in his exceeding agony. "I hope Christ suffered less than this," he moaned, "or I do not envy him his rôle of crossed son of God. Cranmer," he muttered, at last, "Cranmer. Him I will see, and none other. No," with a groan, "not yet, not yet. No, not yet. Let me repose a little, in God's sweet name, you bastards," a weak moan. "Let me rest . . . . Then I—I shall, as I find myself, so determine. Avaunt from me! Do you hear me—do you seek to murder me, who am already summoned before my God?"

From his terrible glare they retreated. After an hour's restless tossing slumber he awoke. His head swam, his senses were dazed. They had to bend almost to his bloated lips to catch what they sought to say. "Cranmer," he moaned. "Have him here with all haste! Cranmer . . . ."

The archbishop had withdrawn to Croydon. He was sent for, at top speed; and he came at top speed.

When he arrived, Henry was speechless.

Cranmer knew the rôle in such a sweetly luscious moment. It was for such moments that servants of Mother Church lived. "Sire," he besought, "since you can not speak, testify by some sign to me your hope in the saving mercy of Christ."

Well, he had bedded more wenches than Christ had, Henry's distracted mind remembered. He stared steadily, stonily, at this creature of his for a moment. He stretched out his bloated hand, to find it enclosed within the firm old

hand of the archbishop. Henry wrung the other's hand once feebly. And then he closed his eyes.

After a moment they opened, and his thickened tongue sought to speak. "Monks—monks!" they said. Some held this was said pleadingly, as if he repented in his extremity, and desired these lustful and well-fed vicars of Christ to squire his last moments. Some held that the ghosts of monks sent to the flames or the blocks were thronged around his bed, jeering at the dying king. No one knew.

And then he died.

It was two o'clock in the morning of January 28, 1547, at the royal palace of Westminster. Henry was fifty-six years old; he had been king of England for thirty-six years.

Well, give him a chest in the midst of the privy chamber, with services said continuously for five days. Give him a goodly hearse, with eighty square tapers, every light two feet in length, the whole containing two thousand weight in wax. Give his hearse twelve days in the chapel, with masses and dirges said every day. On St. Valentine's day bury him at Windsor . . . .

Here the coffin stood all night among the broken walls of Sion. The leaden coffin, cleft by the shaking of the carriage, the pavement of the church was wetted with Henry's blood. Plumbers were summoned, in the morning, to solder the coffin. And all saw what happed: a dog crept under their feet, and under their feet licked up the king's blood. Here's Master William Greville, and the plumber, seeking to drive the dog away. Not so, until he has licked up the last drop of kingly blood. There's the plague in that blood, and the dropsy, and all manner of cruelties and treacheries . . . . Lap it to the last drop, you hound of hell . . . .

This was when the sleepy choristers and mourners had retired to rest, after the midnight dirges were sung. The

dead king was left to defend himself, as best he might, from his ally, the king of darkness. Who was it but the devil's self who had come to visit the evil king so? Had not Friar Peyto likened the king to Ahab, and his queen Anne to Jezebel, and foretold that the dogs would lick his blood?

And so to the grave, coffin newly soldered.

He had been the noblest knight of Christendom, in his youth; the most formidable champion, the best bow in England and indeed all Europe, a very Og of a man, a very Goliath among puny Davids. He had been wed to the noblest queen of the world—whether you hold that she was Catherine the Spaniard, or Anne the court maiden, or Jane the Seymour queen, or the Flemish woman, or the Howard wanton, or the Parr widow. He had given to England—merrie England—long and sweet merriment, punctuated with blood and groans. He had ended the slavish subservience to the anti-Christ of Rome; he had driven the monkish and clerical leeches out of England; he had left a magnificent son, who would reign, with his heirs forever . . . . Or, if he died without issue, a princess, Mary, daughter of kings and queens, to reign with her offspring forever; or, if she died without issue, a princess, Elizabeth, daughter of the Howards and the Tudors, Plantagenets, Yorkists, and Lancastrians, who would reign with her offspring forever . . . . Or, if she died without issue . . . .

Peace to his ashes, which have peace. Peace to his soul, in the name of Jesus Christ, his gentle Lord and Master, in whose sweet name Tower Hill and much of England had been red so often . . . . Peace to his soul.

Modern to the last inch of him, with the new world discovered, and this clerk's trick of printing, and gunpowder that frightened the commonalty, and the new learning, mostly that which dealt with man's right to be his own pope, in God's sight . . . . A man who hungered and thirsted,

and who in consequence ate and drank; a man who lusted, and in consequence bedded whom he willed . . . . A great champion, sickly toward the end, but most remembered for the day when his poet's voice sang:

Company with honesty
Is virtue, vices to flee;
Company is good and ill,
But every man has his free will.
The best ensue, the worst eschew!
My mind shall be
Virtue to use, vice to refuse;
Thus shall I use me.

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